REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM, 1907-1908.

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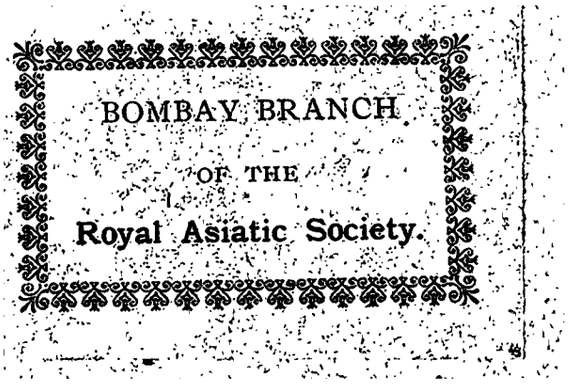

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PART I.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

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GENERAL SUMMARY.

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ADMINISTRATION OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM, 1907-1908.

PART I.—GENERAL SUMMARY.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

TOURS OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

SIR LANCELOT HARE, K.C.S.I., was in charge of the Province throughout the year.

2. His Honour left Shillong for his monsoon tour on the 15th July and arrived at Dacca on the 29th, after visiting Sylhet, Sunamganj, Maulvi Bazar, Habiganj, Bhairab and Munshiganj. After a brief halt in Dacca, Sir Lancelot Hare again left on tour, visiting first the headquarters of the Mymensingh district and the subdivisional stations of Jamalpur and Tangail, and subsequently proceeding to Faridpur and Madaripur. Tours.

On the 14th August, His Honour arrived at Barisal, and made a prolonged tour in the district, inspecting all the subdivisional headquarters. A visit to the Brahmanbaria subdivision of the Tippera district brought the tour to a close, and a return was made to Shillong on the 2nd September.

The cold-weather tour commenced on the 17th November with a visit to the Assam district of Nowgong, where, in addition to the usual inspections, His Honour examined the scheme for bridging the Kallang. From Nowgong the Lieutenant-Governor proceeded by river to Dacca, paying Dhubri a short visit *en route*.

Early in December, Sir Lancelot Hare went to Noakhali, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazar. At Chittagong various matters of local interest were discussed, more especially those connected with the improvement of the Port. From here His Honour left for Calcutta, where an opportunity was taken to meet the members of the Railway Board for an informal discussion of the various railway projects in connection with this Province.

On the 3rd January, His Honour returned to Dacca to meet the Royal Commission on Decentralization, and in the latter part of that month paid a second short visit to Calcutta to attend the investiture of Indian Orders held by His Excellency the Viceroy.

From Calcutta His Honour proceeded direct to Imphal, the capital of the Native State of Manipur, in order to instal His Highness Raja Chura Chand and invest him with the powers recently granted by the Government of India on his coming of age.

Before returning to Dacca, at the end of February, His Honour visited Golághát, Jorhat and Dibrugarh, opening an exhibition of industrial and agricultural products at Jorhát. His Honour finally left for Shillong about the middle of April.

CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

3. During the year four Additional Magistrates were posted temporarily with the sanction of the Government of India to the larger districts of Eastern Bengal, and a fifth officer was placed on deputation as Additional Magistrate in Mymensingh. Changes in the administration.

An important change in budget procedure was introduced by the orders of the Government of India issued in January 1908, the effect of which will be to give

Local Governments full discretion in budgetting under Provincial heads. The Financial powers of administrative officers were also increased on the principle of decentralizing authority to sanction expenditure.

With effect from the 1st January 1908, the Railway Police jurisdiction over certain lines of railway was transferred from the Province of Bengal to Eastern Bengal and Assam, and a general police district was created, embracing all the lands occupied by these railways.

Other minor changes in administration are noticed in the chapter dealing with the branch of administration affected.

RELATIONS WITH TRIBUTARY STATES AND FRONTIER AFFAIRS.

Manipur. 4. In May 1907, the administration of the State was made over to His Highness the Raja and a Darbar; and the Raja was formally installed on the *gadi* by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in February 1908. The new Administration has made a satisfactory start. The year under report was one of prosperity: the price of rice fell considerably and revenue collections showed a marked increase. The prospects of the Manipur Company, Limited, producing and trading in silk, are very promising. Further progress was made with disarming the hill tribes, which, on the whole, gave little trouble. The hill schools, though not very largely attended, are doing good work. Two new dispensaries were opened in the State during the year.

Hill Tippera. 5. The Police were relieved of revenue collection work, and a separate *tahsil* staff appointed with a Superintendent at its head. The numerical staff of the Police force was in consequence very considerably reduced. The Superintendent of Police passed the Dacca Police Training School course during the year. The number of primary schools was increased, and 50 per cent. of the boys sent up from the Agartala High School for the Calcutta University Entrance Examination were successful. Postal communications within the State were improved. The rice crop suffered to some extent from drought, which also interfered with trade, but the cotton crop was good, and there was no real scarcity. The revenue derived from the zamindaris exceeded that of the previous year by nearly one and a half lakhs of rupees. There was also a considerable increase in the number of families who immigrated into the State during the year.

Frontier tribes—Mishmis. 6. The blockade of the Chulikáta and Bebejiya Mishmis was maintained throughout the year.

Nagas. 7. A raid was committed on the Sarkari Nága hamlet of Wakpang, probably by Rangpang Nágas in revenge for the death in jail of some of their tribe who had been imprisoned for kidnapping. The matter is under the consideration of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Naga Hills. 8. A punitive expedition was despatched against the village of Kehomi for refusal to pay a fine inflicted on the village, and the village was burned. Raiding is continually in progress across the frontier, and the cases reported form probably only a small part of the actual occurrences, as only those instances which take place close to the frontier come to light. The views of the Local Government on the question of spheres of control in the trans-frontier areas have been placed before the Government of India. The absence of a sphere of control frequently places the Deputy Commissioner in an embarrassing position when villages beyond the frontier appeal to him to settle their disputes.

Garo Hills. 9. At the beginning of the year the agitation of Sonaram was causing considerable trouble, and interfered with the progress of education amongst the Gáros. The people are reported to be afraid of Sonaram, and assist him with money for that reason, even when they feel no enthusiasm for the agitation. Certain Nokmas even sold their property to provide Sonaram with money. At the close of the year the trouble had abated and a more healthy spirit prevailed in the Mission schools.

Lushai Hills. 10. Under orders of the Government of India, a punitive expedition was undertaken against the village of Zongling in the unadministered tract south of Sherkor. The Superintendent subsequently met two Burma officers, the Superintendent of the North Arracan Hill Tracts and the Superintendent of the Chin Hills, and joint proposals were formulated at the meeting for the delimitation of the southern boundary of the Lushai Hills and for the administration of the tract lying between that boundary and the Arracan Hill Tracts, and were submitted to the respective Governments. There was no other political incident during the year.

Chittagong Hill Tracts. 11. In February 1907 the boundary between the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the district of Akyab in Burma was demarcated in accordance with the recommendations of two officers specially deputed by the Governments of this Province

and of Burma respectively, to meet on the disputed border and discover a suitable boundary line. In May a gang of Maghs living in the jurisdiction of the Ruma police outpost murdered a head-constable and a constable from the outpost and shortly afterwards attacked the outpost, setting fire to the buildings, shooting another police officer dead and wounding two more. In all thirty-three persons were brought to trial in connection with the two outrages, of whom twenty-five were convicted, two persons being sentenced to death, eight to transportation for life, and the remainder to various terms of rigorous imprisonment. The provisions of the Public Demands Recovery Act, I (B.C.) of 1895, were extended in a modified form during the year to the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

12. The presence of the police guard at Shella kept that State quiet during the year. The village of Sohrarim was fined for the demolition of a boundary pillar, and the Siem was ordered to re-erect it at his own cost. The conflict between custom and enlightenment is growing, and is likely to become more marked in the future. The chief need of the district is the development of communications to permit of use being made of its undoubtedly great mineral resources. Gambling and the drinking of country spirit are still rampant in many parts, and are responsible for much of such crime and poverty as exist. In the southern part of the district the effects of scarcity were felt. The question of reducing the number of stills in the whole district and of raising an Excise Police for the Station of Shillong is now under the consideration of Government. A survey of the Barapani coal-field was made during the year and applications for a lease for working invited. There were 478 licensed guns at the close of the year, an increase of two on the previous year, but steps are being taken to increase the number of licenses issued in Form XI.

CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

Condition of the people.

13. The continued high prices of food-grains, while telling hardly upon the middle classes living on fixed incomes, brought fair prosperity to the cultivators. There was, however, a heavy fall in the price of jute. The rates of wages for all kinds of labour were high, and cultivators appear to have realised the advisability of rendering themselves independent of the market by keeping a sufficient stock of rice for home consumption. At the same time the increase of jute cultivation and the high demand for food-grains have, with improved communications, etc., materially altered during the past few years the economic conditions under which the ordinary raiyat lives, inasmuch as he now tends to accumulate money instead of merely storing food-grains for his family's consumption: and the art of managing money is one in which the raiyat has still much to learn.

CHAPTER II.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND.

REALIZATION OF THE REVENUE.

Remittances of revenue and rent by money order.

14. The number of revenue money orders issued and the amount of revenue remitted by them showed an appreciable increase, and the system is evidently growing slowly in popularity. Though there was a slight increase in the number of money orders issued for payment of rent, there was also an increase, in all but five districts, in the percentage of refusals by landlords. The system is naturally unpopular with zamindars and their *amla*, and its use is always discouraged by them.

Operation of the Sale Law.

15. The Sale Law was administered with leniency and moderation. The percentages of sales on defaults varied from ·8 to 19·5, and in three districts only did it exceed 10. In seven cases recommendation was made to Government for annulment of sale on the ground of hardship.

Certificate procedure.

16. There was a marked increase in the number of certificates issued during the year, mainly in the districts of the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions. There was a slight improvement on the preceding year in the percentage of disposals and the administration of the Department was on the whole satisfactory. In very few cases did recourse to actual sale prove necessary, the mere issue of certificates sufficing in most cases to secure the satisfaction of the demand. Imprisonment was resorted to in six cases only, five of which occurred in the Chittagong district.

Coercive measures under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

17. The number of estates against which notices of demand were issued showed a slight decrease. The experiment of issuing warrants at once and dispensing with demand notices has established the fact that the procedure is convenient so far as the collection of revenue is concerned. Attachment and sale were resorted to more freely than in the preceding year in the Surma Valley, but in the Assam Valley, where the mauzadars appear to have been more successful in exerting their personal influence in the matter of revenue collection, such cases markedly decreased in number. Orders for ejectment were issued during the year in one district only, and in all cases but two the orders were enforced by the Land Records staff.

Processes.

18. There was a large increase in the number of processes served during the year. The service of processes through Presidents of *panchayats* cannot be said to have shown any tendency towards improvement, but hopes are still entertained of its ultimate success.

Miscellaneous land revenue.

19. Collection of miscellaneous land revenue showed a decided improvement. Of the current demand, 98·8 per cent. was collected, and 94·1 per cent. of the arrear demand. Nearly seven lakhs of the total current demand represented recovery of Survey and Settlement charges, and it is most satisfactory to note that the whole of the arrears, amounting to nearly one and three quarter lakhs of rupees, were paid in during the year; while the recoveries on current account exceeded the estimate by over half a lakh, the whole sum so realized being collected with but very little resort to coercive measures.

Land registration.

20. The percentage of applications for mutation granted was 4·56 of the total number of interests registered. The number of applications filed during the year rose by over 10,000, more than 9,000 of this increase coming from the district of Chittagong. The number of proprietary interests registered in that district considerably exceeded the total of all other Eastern Bengal districts taken together, and of the total of expenditure on land registration for the year—rather over Rs. 17,000—more than Rs. 15,000 is debitable to the Chittagong district. In Assam, the system of mutation by summary procedure is still in an experimental stage, and steps are being taken to simplify it and make it more popular.

Partitions.

21. The percentage of cases disposed of during the year was again very low both in Eastern Bengal and Assam. The new Act is reported to be, on the whole, an improvement on the old, but the Board are proposing to address Government on the subject of modifying section 88, under the present provisions of which unnecessary hardship is often caused to parties by cases being struck off at an advanced stage, and after expenditure of large sums of money. In Eastern Bengal partitions were allowed in 45 cases only.

Land Acquisition.

22. Several important projects were disposed of during the year, including the improvement of the Madaripur *bhil* route, the extension of the new civil station at Dacca, and the improvement of the port and the acquisition of a site for a Government House at Chittagong. Government is now considering the question of simplifying and shortening land acquisition procedure.

Loans.

23. Only one loan was issued during the year under the Land Improvement Loans Act. The sum issued in loans under the Agriculturists' Loans Act was less than one-fourth of that issued in the previous year, when agricultural conditions were bad. The improved conditions also resulted in fairly good collections of outstanding amounts. The outstanding balance was at the close of the year rather less than seven lakhs. Advances under this Act were, as before, highly appreciated.

Co-operative Credit Societies.

24. The progress made by these societies during the year was very marked. The number of societies, urban and rural, rose from 60 to 135. All but two of the societies worked at a profit, and in nearly every case the profits were transferred to the reserve fund. The rural societies issued loans amounting to nearly Rs. 1,55,000 to their members,—a sum more than five times greater than that issued in the previous year. Considering that the rates of interest charged by money-lenders in Eastern Bengal range from 37½ to 150 per cent. per annum, the benefits conferred by loans from these societies at a rate never higher than 18¾ per cent. are obviously incalculable. Though a large proportion of the amount advanced in loans was spent on productive purposes, it is only natural that the loans were chiefly taken with the object of repaying old debts. But it is to be hoped that the natural growth of the movement will gradually encourage those habits of thrift amongst the cultivator class the absence of which has involved so large a proportion of them in hopeless debt.

The movement is not as yet sufficiently strongly established as to be independent of Government aid, but the progress made during the year gives rise to a confident expectation that the time is not far distant when the societies will stand

on a permanent and self-supporting basis. It is disappointing that the number of non-official controllers and assistants has not risen proportionately with the expansion of the movement, though the help rendered by those who have come forward has been most valuable. As regards District and Subdivisional Officers, there is no reason to doubt that more active and valuable assistance would be readily given by them if only the directions in which their activities might be exercised towards the furtherance of the movement were made clearer to them.

SURVEYS AND SETTLEMENTS.

Surveys and Settlements—Eastern Bengal.

25. Early in the year the Departments of Land Records and Agriculture were separated, and a Director placed at the head of each. The Director of Land Records now has control of all settlement operations, great and small, in which a special staff is engaged. Survey and settlement operations on a large scale were confined to the districts of Faridpur and Bakarganj and a commencement was also made in the survey of the district of Jalpaiguri. Preparations were, further, far advanced for sending an additional settlement party to commence operations in Mymensingh. In Bakarganj the final record-of-rights for three-fourths of the district was completed, and only certain case work remains. Over five lakhs were realised in this district towards the recovery of costs. In Faridpur the cadastral survey and *khanapuri* made great progress. It was found impossible, however, to attest during the same field season, as was originally arranged. Plans are now being matured for the constitution, under a separate Superintendent or Director, of a separate survey staff for this Province which will carry out all traverse survey operations and assist in the supervision of cadastral work, and will prepare all the maps required in the new Drawing Office to be established in Shillong.

Assam.

26. Good progress was made in the work of resettling the districts of Darrang and Nowgong. A new form of *patta* has been introduced, which is much appreciated, and it has been arranged to supply each settlement-holder, in addition to his *patta*, with a printed copy of the village map showing the position of his fields without the aid of written boundaries, at cost price. "Extension Survey" was carried out to a considerable extent during the year, particularly in Lakhimpur, Kámrúp and Sibságar. In Lakhimpur the work is preparatory to the resettlement of the district.

LAND RECORDS.

Land Records.

27. In Eastern Bengal the use of the record-of-rights prepared by the Settlement Department is slowly but perceptibly increasing, and it is satisfactory to note that the practical completion of the record in the Bakarganj district has resulted in a diminution by 50 per cent. in the number of rioting cases. As a rule, however, the reports regarding the maintenance of the record in Government and Wards' estates in the Eastern Bengal districts show a general absence of field-to-field inquiries. This must be attributed to the unsatisfactory method at present in force of relying upon the collecting agency for the maintenance of the record, in addition to its own duties. In Assam the system of maintenance by the agency of village recorders continued to work well, though there is a general feeling amongst the recorders that their pay and prospects should be improved. This matter will doubtless be taken up when uniformity of system can be secured for the whole Province. The recently-introduced system of recording mutations by summary procedure in Assam has proved very popular, over 21,000 out of a total of 22,075 mutations recorded in the Sylhet district having been recorded in this manner. The report of the Special Officer deputed to elaborate a system of maintenance in Chittagong is now under the consideration of Government.

SETTLEMENTS FOR SPECIAL CULTIVATION (WASTE LANDS).

Settlements for special cultivation.

28. The area settled for special cultivation at the end of the year was 1,167,667 acres, with a revenue demand of Rs. 6,78,567. While there was an increase on the previous year of over 4,000 acres in the area, the revenue demand decreased considerably owing to the reassessment at a slightly lower rate of tea lands in four of the Assam districts, in the course of the recent settlements. Six estates were resettled for a term of 30 years in the Jalpaiguri district at an appreciably higher rate of revenue than that fixed in the preliminary leases. A considerable number of applications for settlement for special cultivation in Assam were filed, but the percentage of cases disposed of during the year was poor.

GOVERNMENT, WARDS' AND ATTACHED ESTATES.

Government.

29. The number of estates under the direct management of Government was 1,392, or 5 less than in the previous year. The appointment of a Colonisation Officer for the Sundarbans has had most encouraging results, both as regards colonisation proper and also in the improved condition of the *khas mahals* placed under his charge.

Wards' and attached estates.

30. The number of estates under the management of the Court of Wards during the year was 53, and 48 estates remained under management at its close. The most important estate taken under the management of the Court was that of the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca. Collections of revenue and cesses due to Government amounted to only 87·79 per cent. of the current demand, this being due almost entirely to the hopelessly-involved position of the estate of Sir Sourindra Mohan Tagore in Bakarganj. Collections of rent and cesses due to the estates showed, however, a considerable improvement, and the uncollected balance, though still very heavy, was much reduced. A special Deputy Collector has been deputed to assist the Collector of Bakarganj in the management of the estates in that district, and in view of the careful attention given by the Collector to the subject during the year, a considerable improvement may reasonably be looked for in the working of these estates. The Public Demands Recovery Act, I (B.C.) of 1895, has been introduced into the district of Sylhet. Special measures were taken to safeguard the interests of wards' estates in the districts in which major Survey and Settlement operations are in progress.

REVENUE AND RENT-PAYING CLASSES.

Unrest in Eastern Bengal.

31. The early portion of the year was marked by serious agrarian unrest in the Eastern Bengal districts generally, and by outbreaks of violence in the districts of Mymensingh, Tippera and Rajshahi, which were found by the courts to be due both to the agitation and to economic causes. The disturbances were quelled within a short time.

Condition of tenants.

32. The establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies has been highly beneficial to tenants who had been labouring under an extortionate system of money-lending. The agriculturist class has begun to take an increased interest in public life, and a number of tenants' associations have been formed. The tenantry are showing a high appreciation of the benefits of a general survey and record-of-rights; and the operations have effected in Bakarganj a substantial decrease in the number of rioting cases.

During the year the Bengal Tenancy Act was amended and supplemented by Act I (Eastern Bengal and Assam Council) of 1908. The progress of survey and settlement operations is necessarily gradual, and a considerable time must elapse before they can cover the entire areas in which the relations between landlords and tenants are noticeably unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER III.

PROTECTION.

LEGISLATION.

Acts passed.

33. One Act was passed by Council during the year 1907-1908, *viz.*, Act III of 1907 [The Eastern Bengal and Assam Court of Wards (Amendment) Act, 1907.]

Bills introduced.

34. A Bill to supplement and amend the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, was introduced in Council in November 1907 and was passed after the close of the year.

Acts extended.

35. Eight Acts were extended, wholly or in part, by the Local Government to various parts of the province.

POLICE.

MILITARY POLICE.

Strength.

36. Two companies of Military Police were enlisted at Dacca, one company being an addition to the sanctioned strength of the Province and the other being formed by the conversion of the old company of special reserves into Military Police.

Discipline and efficiency.

37. The discipline of the battalions was good, and a high standard of efficiency in drill, shooting and signalling was shown.

Expeditions.

38. Two minor punitive expeditions were carried out satisfactorily during the year, one to a trans-frontier Nága village, the other beyond the administrative frontier of the Lushai Hills.

39. During the year under report disturbances and unrest in the transferred districts necessitated considerable demands on the services of the Military Police, and detachments were posted temporarily to preserve order at various places. This work was performed by both officers and men with tact and good temper, and showed that the Province possesses in the Gurkha Military Police a force well suited to such work. Extra duties.

Civil Police.

40. The force has been largely increased during the year, but in several districts it has been found difficult to obtain suitable recruits. Strength.

41. Discipline has been good except, as in the previous year, in Sylhet and Kamrup. The new constables' training schools will, it is hoped, have a markedly good effect upon discipline generally. The percentage of constables punished to the total force was 15,—a slight improvement on the previous year. Discipline.

42. Progress was made with the execution of the reforms advocated by the Police Commission. A Police Training School was established at Dacca, five more Deputy Superintendents of Police were appointed, 200 Head Constables were recruited to replace Writer-Constables, the general cadre was increased by the appointment of 25 Sub-Inspectors, the staff of the Provincial Criminal Investigation Department was increased, the Armed Police and the Railway Police were strengthened, and various administrative reforms were introduced. This, considering the difficulties in which the events of the year involved the department, constitutes a satisfactory record of progress. The River Police still remain to be organised as an independent force, and the abolition of town chaukidars has not yet been carried out. Reforms.

43. The improved *panchayati* system cannot be said to have yielded more satisfactory results in the year under report than in the previous year, though the defects first noticed in the working of the scheme have to some extent been mitigated in those districts where the rules emancipating chaukidars from the control of the thana police have been relaxed. Jealousy between the police and the *panchayats* appears to be the root of the difficulty, and the fact that chaukidars are apt to play off the President and the Police against each other as a cloak for their own shortcomings. Rural Police.

44. The total number of cognizable cases dealt with by the Police showed a slight decrease on the previous year, but the judicial results of cases sent up compare unfavourably with those of 1906-1907. Only 44·3 per cent. of the cases investigated were sent up for trial. Crime.

Out of 5,834 persons bound down to keep the peace, all but 530 belong to the Dacca Division : the remaining districts do not appear to have taken full advantage of these preventive sections.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

45. The only alteration effected in the local limits of the Criminal Courts during the year was the transfer of a small tract of land—some four acres—from the district of Darjeeling in the Province of Bengal to the district of Jalpaiguri in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. There was an increase of nearly 5,000 on the figures of 1906 in the number of criminal offences reported, and an increase of nearly 3,000 in the number of cases brought to trial. Since the formation of the Province the number of stipendiary Magistrates has steadily increased, the number in 1907 exceeding that in 1905 by 47. The parallel increase in the number of cases brought to trial may be taken therefore as an index of greater administrative efficiency resulting from the increase in the magisterial cadre. In cases committed to Courts of Sessions there was a decrease on the previous year's figures of 151, but there was a slight increase in the duration of Sessions trials. An unusual feature in the criminal returns of the year was the appearance of several offences against the State—a class of offences which has been entirely absent from recent returns. The receipts and charges (excluding those for the Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts) exceeded those of 1906 by over Rs. 56,000 and Rs. 74,000, respectively. Work of the year.

JAILS.

46. The year under report witnessed no radical changes in jail administration, but further progress was made towards the assimilation of the procedure in the Assam and the Eastern Bengal districts. The fourfold classification of jails that obtains in Assam and in most other parts of India was extended to the jails of Eastern Bengal; the warder staff in the Assam jails was regraded and strengthened by the appointment Administration.

of convict warders, and the Bengal circle system extended to Assam; and sanction was obtained at the end of the year for the conversion of the sub-jails at Dhubri, Aijal and Kohima into district jails with a Civil Hospital Assistant as jailor.

Work of the year.

47. The number of prisoners confined in the various jails was lower than in the previous year. The figures afford a satisfactory indication of the general decrease in crime due to improved agricultural conditions. There was a considerable decrease in the number of sentences of transportation and of imprisonment for over two years, the total number of such sentences having fallen from 894 in 1906 to 782 in the year under report. Though the figures for the admission of convicts and under-trial prisoners showed a decrease, the daily average population was the highest in the decade, and consequently there was still a good deal of overcrowding, particularly in the Dacca Central Jail. This condition of affairs is likely to continue for some time. To meet the difficulty it has been decided to build a new jail at Jorhat, to enlarge the Bogra Jail, and to convert the Comilla District Jail into a combined district and central jail. Overcrowding does not appear to have affected the health of the prisoners, which was generally good, and the results attest the value of careful supervision of the dieting of prisoners.

CIVIL JUSTICE.

Subordinate Civil Courts.

48. The number of original suits instituted during the year showed a decrease of 743 on the previous year. A slight decrease took place also in the number of appeals preferred. Notwithstanding these decreases, the pending files of both original suits and appeals show a considerable increase over the figures of the previous year. There were a large number of suits pending for more than a year. These results are due to the smaller outturn of the staff, which is particularly noticeable in the case of Munsifs.

REGISTRATION.

49. The returns show a rapidly-increasing growth throughout the province in almost all classes of registration business, which may be attributed chiefly to a growing appreciation of the benefits of registration and to extended facilities provided by the increase of offices. It is hoped that the formation of a permanent committee to assist in supervising the work of Muhammadan Marriage Registrars will do much towards increasing the usefulness and efficiency of that branch of the Department.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Municipalities.

50. No change took place during the year in the number of municipal institutions in the Province. The total income increased by nearly three and a quarter lakhs, of which over one-half was represented by grant from Government. There was also an increase of nearly three lakhs in expenditure, the increase being shared by all divisions except the Surma Valley and Hill Districts. The most important municipal project which reached completion during the year was the Narayanganj water-works, which were constructed at a total cost of slightly over two lakhs. The scheme for remodelling the water-works at Dacca, with a view to improve the supply to the old town and to provide for the new civil station, has advanced considerably and may be expected to be put into operation in the near future. The year was in general marked by considerable activity and progress in all departments of municipal administration, and the few municipalities whose record for the year is one of stagnation or mismanagement stand out in the greater relief. Much advantage is expected from the appointment of a Sanitary Engineer for the province to advise on important schemes and as the Local Government is now in a position, with the Imperial grant of three lakhs, to assist municipalities in effecting sanitary reforms, aid will not be wanting for well-considered schemes.

District and Local Boards.

51. There is evidence of considerable progress in the working of District and Local Boards throughout the province, especially in the development of primary education, in the improvement of veterinary services and in the attention paid to the supply of drinking-water in rural areas. The increase in expenditure on education, which was common to all divisions, amounted to over a lakh and a half of rupees. Considerable activity was also displayed in the encouragement and development of local industries, and this matter will receive further attention when the report of the Special Officer appointed by Government to survey the industrial position in the province has been considered. At the same time, it must be admitted that the defects in the working of the Boards—such as inaccurate budgetting, the accumulation of unnecessarily large balances, the want of suitable programmes and the reduction

in expenditure on public works—must be removed before the Boards can be considered as properly fulfilling their obligations. Funds have not been fully utilized, and greater energy must be infused into the working staff of several of the Boards. It is hoped that the appointment of a Special Inspector of Local Works in the Dacca Division will remove the delay in getting projects for work sanctioned, which is mentioned as explaining in some cases the excessive surpluses shown by the Boards during the year.

MILITARY AND VOLUNTEERING.

52. The four Volunteer Corps in the province maintained their strength and efficiency throughout the year.

MARINE.

53. The number of vessels that entered the Port of Chittagong during the year increased by 29, while the aggregate tonnage of the vessels increased by 12 per cent. The values of the imports and exports of the Foreign and Coasting Trade in 1907-1908, amounted to 722·49 lakhs of rupees, against 861·01 lakhs in the previous year. The income of the Port Fund rose by 16·67 per cent. The dredger commenced working for the first time on the 2nd April 1907, and the dredging operations of the year were satisfactory. The revetment of the right bank of the river below the Railway terminal jetties has been carried down 7,000 feet out of about $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles. During the year a sum of Rs. 2,93,000 was borrowed by the Port Commissioners from Government on account of the capital cost of the revetment. The total expenditure actually incurred on revetment work during the year 1907-1908 was Rs. 6,88,273, against Rs. 1,96,940 in the previous year.

CHAPTER IV.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE.

54. The Agricultural Chemist appointed for the province began work in December 1907. But the officer selected for the post of Economic Botanist is still under training at Pusa. It is expected that he will take up his duties by February 1909. New Experts.

The delay in the construction of the laboratory building and the residences for the Agricultural Experts has been a serious drawback to the progress of their work. The Fibre Expert still has his headquarters at Pusa.

55. Every attempt to grow different varieties of cotton on a field scale in the plains has failed. Experiments were, however, made with fair success in small areas on the low hills of Sylhet and Cachar. Jute cultivation, which has now become established in all parts of the Assam Valley, extended very considerably during the year. Two jute farms were started in North Kamrup under European management, and are reported to have obtained good yields of first-class fibre. The Dacca *gandari* sugarcane was very successful on the Rajshahi Farm, and was also tried in Bogra and Rangpur. The Bengal *khari* cane gave the best all-round results on the Jorhat Farm, though striped Mauritius proved the best "first year" cane. Some small experiments were made with rice at Government expense on the Dacca station and also on the Chittagong Model Farm and the Noakhali *khas mahal* garden. In the former the fine *aus* rice of the Central Provinces was found to give a smaller yield than the local *ballam*, but greater than the local *chekual*. Assam *hat sail* and Burdwan *dudkhani* winter rice were contrasted with the local varieties, and the results were in favour of the Assam variety. Repeated attempts to introduce wheat in the plains of Assam have ended in complete failure. Successful experiments with the Bordeaux mixture were conducted in the Khasi Hills, where potatoes and English vegetables were grown with excellent results. A cattle-breeding farm has also been established in these hills. Agricultural Development.

In order to rescue the silkworm-rearing industry from decay, it has been decided to adopt Pasteur's system in this province, and with the object of providing an adequate supply of seed cocoons free from disease, negotiations were made for the acquisition of a permanent site at Mirganj on the bank of the Ganges. On this site rearing-houses will be erected capable of producing 1,000 maunds of seed cocoons a year. A proposal to open a second large grainerie in Bogra and possibly others in Malda is under consideration. Sericulture.

The experiments in silkworm-rearing at Shillong again proved a success, and the Khasis have planted out a large number of mulberry cuttings in consequence.

WEATHER AND CROPS.

Weather and Crops.

56. The year was one of comparative drought owing to the very early cessation of the monsoon rains. Crops were on the whole, however, fairly satisfactory. The *aus* crop was good, and the winter rice crop turned out better than was expected, and prices, though in June they rose to Rs. 5-7 per maund, ruled at a steadier and more reasonable level than in the previous year. Though the last three years have been marked by a succession of *bhadoi* and winter rice crops considerably below normal in yield, prices in the year under report show a considerable improvement on the two previous years. The area under cultivation is steadily increasing throughout the province, the expansion being most evident in respect of the cultivation of rice, jute, rape, mustard, gram, and other pulses. The returns on which the statistics of crop areas are based are still far from perfect in the permanently-settled districts. A failure of the second half of the monsoon in 1907 emphasised the necessity for improving water channels, which would not only retain and distribute water, but would also serve to carry away the surplus in time of flood. The rates of wages for agricultural labour of all kinds reached a very high level, and despite the losses caused by the fall in the price of jute and by the partial failure of crops in high-level lands, owing to drought, the year was on the whole one of fair prosperity for the agricultural classes.

FORESTS.

Forests.

57. The total area of the reserved forests was 6,550 square miles, which exceeds the previous year's area by 300 square miles. The outlay on communications and buildings was very considerably in excess of that of the previous year and substantial progress was thus made in the advancement of the prospects of the Department. No progress was made in reducing exploitation by departmental agency in favour of the system of sales to purchasers of forest produce, subject to the prescriptions of the working plans, which proved so successful in the Jalpaiguri Division. The absence of enterprise and demand on the part of purchasers is said to be the obstacle which stands in the way of the development of the system in other Divisions. The rubber outturn of the Charduar plantation was sent to England for sale as no satisfactory market was found for it in India. The staff of gazetted officers was brought up to the full sanctioned strength during the year and another obstacle to progress was thus removed. Since the close of the year the reorganisation of the Forest Service has been sanctioned and material additions will be made to all grades.

MANUFACTURES, MINES AND FACTORIES.

Manufactures.

58. During the year the area under tea increased by rather over 5,000 acres. The new planting of 1907 exceeded that of the previous year by 61 per cent., while there was a very considerable decrease in the area of old cultivation abandoned. The total outturn of tea for the year, which was over 214¼ million pounds, probably constitutes a record for the districts now comprised in this Province. There was an advance in prices in the Calcutta market and to a smaller extent in the London market. The season was on the whole one of prosperity. The difficulty of obtaining a sufficient supply of labour is still keenly felt, but it is hoped that improvement of communications and of the local conditions on gardens and the removal of unnecessary restrictions will alleviate it.

Mines.

59. The total quantity of coal raised from the different mines was 295,695 tons, and the production of petroleum in Lakhimpur amounted to 3,156,665 gallons, showing a steady increase in both cases.

Factories.

60. The total number of factories at the close of the year was 108, or 9 more than in the previous year. Fourteen new factories and a Railway workshop were brought under the operation of the Act, and six were removed from the list. Jute presses accounted for 86 of the total number of factories in operation. There was an increase on the previous year of over 500 in the number of operatives employed, and a considerable decrease in the number of children. The sanitary arrangements and the general health of the operatives were on the whole good. No prosecutions were instituted during the year.

TRADE.

Sea-borne trade.

61. The value of the sea-borne trade of the province, Rs. 722·49 lakhs, showed a decrease of Rs. 138·52 lakhs on that of the previous year. While foreign trade showed an increase of Rs. 4·15 lakhs, the coasting trade fell off by Rs. 142·68 lakhs. With a normal season and fair crops the large importations of rice from Burma ceased.

62. Railway materials comprised nearly one-third of the total imports. There was a marked rise in the value of European cotton piece-goods imported and this branch of trade has been steadily increasing during the past five years. The value of the imports of tea chests declined by 6½ per cent. but this was due to the development of the saw-mill industry in Assam. The value of imports from the United Kingdom to Chittagong increased by nearly 10 lakhs. The exports of jute showed a decrease which was due to two disastrous fires at the jetties, but the exports of tea increased. The export trade of rice and paddy had not recovered from the failure of the crops in Bengal two years ago. Foreign trade.

63. The heavy decrease in the coasting trade has been explained above. There was a considerable decrease in the import trade with Bengal which was due to greater activity in the importation of goods by railway from Calcutta. Narayanganj has been declared a port for coasting trade. Coasting trade.

64. The value of the trans-frontier trade for the year was returned as Rs. 7,68,487, but the present system of registration is very defective and the figures available are not reliable. The registration of trade between this province and Manipur and Hill Tippera was discontinued with effect from April 1907. The trade with Bhutan constitutes about three-fourths of the total. The returns indicated a marked increase in the value of English cotton piece-goods exported from Assam and Jalpaiguri into Bhutan. Frontier trade.

65. The total value of the rail and river-borne trade, Rs. 4,685 lakhs, showed a slight decrease. There was an increase of rather over a lakh in the value of imports, and though exports increased in quantity, they diminished in value owing to the depression in the jute market. Over 80 per cent. of both the import and the export trade was with Calcutta. Of the registered trade 49 per cent. of the exports and 53 per cent. of the imports were carried by river, but the record of river-borne trade omits all carriage by country boat between this province and all parts of Bengal except Calcutta. Rail and river-borne trade.

PUBLIC WORKS.

66. Some minor improvements were carried out in the Native Infantry Lines at Shillong. Extensions to the Post Office at Dacca, to the combined Post and Telegraph Offices at Patiya and Bogra, and to the Telegraph Office at Chittagong and Silchar were in progress. Imperial Works.

67. Extensive repairs to Government House, Shillong, were in progress, and work was begun on the new Government House at Dacca. A residence for the Lieutenant-Governor was also commenced at Chittagong. Seventeen residences for officials were under construction in the new Civil Station of Dacca; while others for various officials at Chittagong, Barisal, Netrokona, Noakhali, Jalpaiguri, Rajshahi and also ten residences for Munsifs in Eastern Bengal and one at Habiganj in the Sylhet district were either in progress or completed. New circuit-houses at Chittagong, Dinajpur, and Noakhali were in progress, and those at Faridpur and Rangamati were finished. Provincial Works.—Buildings.

Eleven additional acres of land were acquired for the new Civil Station of Dacca, and 14·5 acres of land at Barisal were acquired for official residences. A building for the Dacca Jail Press was under construction and the new Court and office buildings at Jorhat were practically completed.

The Dacca College was nearly ready for occupation. The provision of improved accommodation by construction or purchase was taken in hand for the Rajshahi College and for the Comilla, Faridpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, and Malda zila schools. In Assam extension and improvement of school buildings and quarters for the teaching staff were completed at Sylhet, Silchar, Sunamganj, Gauhati, Shillong, Jorhat, Kohima, Dhubri, Nazira, North Lakhimpur, Kakojan and Chatguri. A model girls' school was under construction at Sylhet. Two-storied barracks were provided for the Rampur-Boalia and Chittagong jails. Numerous police buildings were created in Assam, land was acquired for the extension of the Dacca Medical School and extensive improvements were undertaken in the central distillery at Jorhat.

68. The more important of these were the improvement of the Gauhati water-works, the laying out of the site of the new station at Jorhat, an experimental artesian boring at Jorhat and a telephonic installation in Shillong. Miscellaneous Public Improvements.

One of the five proposed farm buildings at Dacca, a framed structure of the *chang* type, was commenced. Improvements were in progress on the land acquired for the new Civil Station at Dacca. And at Chittagong an experiment in artesian well-boring for a supply of water for the town was carried out successfully.

Communications.

69. Improvements in curves and gradients were made on the Gauhati-Shillong cart-road, and the Assam and North Trunk Roads were metalled and raised in parts, and some of their temporary bridges were replaced by permanent ones. The Cherra end of the Shillong-Cherra cart-road was remetalled, and surveys for new roads from Mawphlang to Bhawalgaon in the Khasi Hills, and from Lohit to Salmara and Noa Alimur in the Lakhimpur district, were carried out. The metalling and improvement of the Dimapur-Manipur cart-road, and of the Nowgong-Kampur and Kathiatoli-Amluki roads were also undertaken. The Silchar-Hailakandi road was widened, and, together with the first three miles of the Cachar-Manipur road, was partly metalled. Bridges over the Tetelisora and Dhansiri rivers and others on the Maulvi Bazar-Shamshernagar road, were completed. The Tandoo Forest road in the Jalpaiguri district was nearing completion, and the damage done to the Duars roads and the Jaldacca bunds by the floods of 1906-1907 was made good. The Tizu Valley road in the Naga Hills was nearly completed, while in the Lushai Hills some work was done on the Aijal-Sairang and on the Aijal-Falam roads, and ten miles of the bridle-path between Lungleh and Demagiri were also widened.

Irrigation.

70. The drainage of the Gaibandha *bhil*, the dredging of the Buriganga river, the removal of snags from the Dibru-Sadiya channel of the Brahmaputra, and *bandalling* work near Dibrugarh were the chief items, of which the three latter were carried out under the steamer companies. One hundred and twenty miles of embankment in the Upper Assam Division were maintained as well as those in Eastern Bengal.

Railways and Tramways.

71. The total open mileage in the Province at the end of the year 1907-1908 was 1,740, against 1,642 in the previous year.

The importance of linking up Shillong with Dacca by a direct line either by the Netrokona-Lengar Bazar route or by the proposed Kulaura-Sylhet branch of the Assam-Bengal Railway was urged by Government.

The Railway Board sanctioned the survey of a branch line from Singjani on the Mymensingh-Jagannathganj Railway through Dewanganj to a point on the left bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Fulchari.

A proposal for the extension of the Strand Road siding of the Assam-Bengal Railway at Chittagong was under consideration, and plans and estimates were asked for from the Agent of the Railway.

The estimate and report of the Rangiya-Tezpur Railway project were under preparation by the Eastern Bengal State Railway.

The construction by private enterprise of a light railway from Serajganj to Ullapara, a distance of 18 miles, was proposed, but it was found that until the scheme for a bridge over the Ganges at or near Sara is matured, the projection of new railway lines in the Rajshahi Division must of necessity remain in abeyance.

The net receipts of the Jorhat State Railway amounted to Rs. 8,717, against Rs. 3,252 in the previous year. The Tezpur-Balipara and the Dibru-Sadiya Railways returned 5·94 and 4·54 per cent., respectively, on their capital outlay, against 7·17 and 4·63 per cent. in 1906. The Dwara-Therria Railway, Company being unable to proceed with the completion of their line were obliged to go into liquidation.

CHAPTER V.

REVENUE AND FINANCE.

FINANCE.

Statistics.

72. The gross receipts of revenue for the year amounted to Rs. 5,08,10,968, and showed an increase of Rs. 21,92,108 on the figures of the previous year. The increase occurred chiefly under the heads Land Revenue, Excise, Stamps and Civil Departments. The only appreciable decrease of revenue was under the head Miscellaneous Civil Receipts.

The total expenditure of the Province was Rs. 3,39,37,924, and exceeded that of the previous year by over thirty-six and a half lakhs. The bulk of this increase, which is found under almost every head, occurred under the heads Civil Departments and Public Works.

LAND REVENUE.

Land Revenue.

73. The total current demand rose from Rs. 1,86,61,491 to Rs. 1,88,01,346. The total collections, current and arrears, amounted to Rs. 1,87,50,683, or 95·23 per cent. of the total demand of Rs. 1,96,90,159.

CUSTOMS.

Customs.

74. The Customs receipts of the Port of Chittagong show a decrease of 7·2 per cent. on those of the previous year. This is due to the reduction of duty on salt, the net duty on which fell by over one lakh of rupees. Imports of goods other than salt, and especially of cotton piece-goods, show a considerable increase and the duty levied on them rose by nearly Rs. 25,000. Five cases were instituted during the year under the Sea Customs Act, and a sum of Rs. 287 was realised in customs fines.

SALT.

Salt.

75. No event of any administrative importance occurred during the year. The importations of salt by sea to Chittagong were nearly double those of the previous year, and the imports from the United Kingdom increased by over 121 per cent. The sales also of imported salt increased by over 5 per cent. These figures would appear to show that the boycott agitation has had no prejudicial effect whatever on the trade in foreign salt in this province. The average wholesale selling price fell from Rs. 2-11-5 in 1906-1907 to Rs. 2-4-11 per maund. Though the price has in very few places fallen by the full amount of the reduction of duty, the reduction has none the less greatly benefited the consumer. At the same time the reduction of duty accounts for a decrease of over 28 per cent. in the receipts of the department during the year. Proposals for the amalgamation of the Excise and Salt establishments are under the consideration of Government, and, pending settlement, the question of the transfer of the control of preventive operations from Bengal to this province has been postponed.

EXCISE.

Excise.

76. The total receipts under all heads amounted to Rs. 67,98,748 and exceeded those of the previous year by over 4¼ lakhs of rupees. Practically the whole of this increase occurred under the heads of country spirit, opium and *ganja*. The policy has been steadily followed of reducing the number of licensed premises by abolishing petty shops, and in spite of the fact that the number of shops has been reduced by 323, the settlements for the current year show an increase of nearly two and a half lakhs on those of the previous year. The introduction of the contract distillery system into the Dibrugarh subdivision of the Lakhimpur district severely taxed the resources of the Jorhat distillery by doubling the area of supply: but steps were taken to cope with the demand by carrying out additions and improvements. Although the success of the contract distillery system in Dibrugarh was prejudiced by the high prices bid for the shops and a consequent rise in retail prices, the revenue of the subdivision showed a substantial increase. There was a very considerable increase in the consumption of both *ganja* and opium, which must be taken as a sign of the prosperity of the masses, and in the case of opium the revenue derived from license fees, in spite of the very considerable reduction in the number of shops, increased in the Assam Valley Division alone by over Rs. 56,000. There appears to be no cause for anxiety that the opium habit is increasing to a dangerous extent among tea-garden coolies, nor that the *ganja* habit is spreading from these immigrants to the Assamese. Steps are, however, being taken to raise the treasury price of opium in the Assam districts so as to reduce consumption. The number of persons tried for offences against the Excise and Opium laws was 63 less than in the previous year, but the existence of a systematic smuggling trade between Tippera and the Native State of Rampur in the United Provinces was discovered during the year.

STAMPS.

Statistics.

77. There was an increase of over six and a half lakhs of rupees in the revenue collected under the Stamp and Court-fees Acts. The increase was mainly under the head of judicial stamps, but the revenue derived from the sale of non-judicial stamps also showed an increase of over Rs. 2,20,000. The Settlement operations in the Bakarganj and Faridpur districts were contributory causes to the increase under both heads. There was a marked fall in the number of cases instituted for infringement of the Stamp Act.

INCOME-TAX.

Income-tax.

78. The net revenue derived from income-tax rose by nearly one lakh of rupees, and the number of assessees by nearly 1,000. The increase of revenue was due very largely to careful revision of the assessment. Only four districts showed a decrease in the final demand, and in each case the decrease was trifling. The figures for the year indicate an advance in the trade and prosperity of the province.

FOREST REVENUE.

Forest Revenue.

79. The gross revenue derived from forests for the year was Rs. 13,87,240, while the expenditure rose to Rs. 8,19,945. The surplus, Rs. 5,67,295 was less than that of the previous year by Rs. 31,451. All the divisions except Darrang worked at a profit. The gazetted staff of the Department reached its full sanctioned strength during the year. The increase of over a lakh in expenditure was due chiefly to the improvement of communications and buildings.

PROVINCIAL FINANCE.

Provincial Revenues.

80. The accounts of the year opened with a balance of Rs. 61,50,000. The budget of the year provided for expenditure leading to an absorption of Rs. 15,05,000 of the opening balance, but the deficit amounted to Rs. 24,40,000, notwithstanding the fact that receipts exceeded the budget estimate by Rs. 4,85,000, owing to normal expansion. The high price of food-grains, which necessitated the grant of grain compensation allowance to Government servants drawing pay not exceeding Rs. 30 per mensem, was responsible for the excess expenditure over budget grant under most of the heads. In certain cases also administrative necessities of the province were a contributory cause. The increase in revenue occurred chiefly under the heads Stamps, Land Revenue, Excise and Registration. The principal decreases were under Provincial Rates, Jails and Medical. The only important savings in expenditure occurred under Assignments and compensations, superannuation allowance and pensions, and contribution to Local Funds. The closing balance for the year was Rs. 37,09,858.

LOCAL FINANCE.

Local Finance.

81. The total receipts of the Incorporated and the Excluded Local Funds amounted to Rs. 59,05,770 and Rs. 20,19,634, respectively, and the expenditure to Rs. 60,22,627 and Rs. 22,22,188. The advance upon the previous year under both receipts and expenditure was considerable, particularly in the case of receipts of Incorporated Local Funds, where the increase was over thirteen lakhs. This improvement was chiefly under Provincial Rates, Education and Civil Works.

The Mohsin Endowment Fund of this province received a contribution of Rs. 31,290, to meet its expenditure from the main Fund in Bengal, from which it was separated with effect from the 1st April 1906.

ROAD AND PUBLIC WORKS CESSES.

Statistics.

82. The Road and Public Works cesses were levied in all the Eastern Bengal districts in which the Cess Act is in force, at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The current demand amounted to Rs. 32,28,508, showing an increase of Rs. 20,964 over that of the previous year. This was due mainly to revaluations in seven districts. Collections amounted to over 101 per cent. of the current demand and there was an appreciable fall in remissions and reductions. In only three districts did collections represent less than 98 per cent. of the demand.

In Assam collections reached a percentage of over 105 on the current demand, which rose during the year, owing to revision of assessment and new settlements, from Rs. 7,25,510 to Rs. 7,33,960.

CHAPTER VI.

VITAL STATISTICS AND MEDICAL SERVICE.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Vital Statistics.

83. The year 1907 was generally healthy. The rainfall was deficient and irregular, and high prices continued, but there were no real signs of distress. The birth-rate was slightly less than that of the previous year, while the death-rate showed a decrease of 2·37 per mille. It is probable that the low figures of mortality indicate imperfect registration rather than more favourable health conditions. The Sanitary Commissioner has

under consideration a scheme for bringing the recording agency more under the direct control of his department. The mortality from fever accounted for over 72 per cent. of the total number of deaths. The ratio for deaths from cholera (2·58 per mille) was identical with that of the previous decade. No report has yet been received from the Commission appointed by the Government of India to enquire into the prevalence of blackwater fever in the Jalpaiguri district. The province is practically free from plague, but *kála-azár*, though continuing to decrease, has shown signs of recrudescence in Kamrup, and has appeared on the borders of Hill Tippera.

IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR INSPECTION.

Immigration.

84. There was a marked increase during the year in the total number of labourers employed, owing chiefly to the existence of famine or scarcity in the recruiting areas. The number of free labour adults employed increased by over 41,000 and thus counterbalanced the decline in recruitments under the Act. Mortality both during transit and on gardens was very heavy, owing to the importation of cholera,—an inevitable consequence of recruitment from persons enfeebled by scarcity. The decline in the number of complaints and prosecutions during the year indicates a continuance of the improvement in the relations between employers and labourers. The orders issued by the Government of India early in the current year, as the result of the recommendations of the committee appointed to inquire into the supply of labour, have effected substantial alterations in the conditions regulating recruitment.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS.

Charitable dispensaries.

85. The number of patients treated during the year was slightly less than in 1906. General healthiness of the population and stricter supervision over the registration of patients are the causes of the decrease. It is regrettable that the Bidyamoyi hospital for females at Mymensingh was practically closed for more than a year for want of a lady doctor, but on the whole the number of women patients treated shows a steady increase. Though the amount of private subscriptions to dispensaries has increased, it is still miserably low compared with the population and wealth of the province. Considerable advance has been made in attempts to bring medical attendance nearer to the people at large.

Lunatic Asylums.

86. There was no marked change in the number of cases admitted to the asylums this year. The preponderance of criminal lunacy amongst Hindus as compared with Muhammadans is remarkable and is fairly constant. Both asylums were taxed beyond their limits during the year, but an additional tubercle ward has been constructed at Dacca, which is used for suitable cases, and the addition at Tezpur of a new barrack has been sanctioned.

SANITATION.

Sanitation.

87. There was a considerable increase during the year in expenditure on sanitation in towns. Government contributed nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs of rupees in grants towards various sanitary projects, the bulk of which was granted to the Dacca Municipality for a conservancy scheme which is now nearing completion. Over $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees was also advanced by Government in loans, Rs. 1,50,000 being lent to the Narayanganj Municipality for the construction of waterworks, which are now complete, and Rs. 5,000 to the Barisal Municipality for the same purpose. Special efforts on the part of the Sanitary Department towards popularising and increasing the sales of pice packets of quinine are necessary: in only one district, Bakarganj, where the drug has always been popular, did the sales reach a satisfactory figure, and as a rule the sales were lowest in those districts where the ratio of mortality from fevers is highest.

The Sanitary Board has been strengthened by the addition of the newly-appointed Sanitary Engineer, and did useful work during the year. Now that the Government of India have placed at the disposal of the Local Government an annual grant of Rs. 3,00,000 for improvements in sanitation, the responsibilities and importance of the Board will increase.

VACCINATION.

Vaccination.

88. The total number of operations performed increased by 3 per cent. as compared with the preceding year, the number of re-vaccinations showing a substantial increase. The prejudice against vaccination shown by the Ferazi Muhammadans in some of the Eastern Bengal districts, by the Mahapurushiyas in Kamrup, and by some of the aboriginal tribes of Assam is reported to be gradually disappearing.

Glycerinated vaccine from the depôt at Shillong is now supplied to all districts, and arm-to-arm vaccination has ceased. The results of infant vaccination in towns during the year were poor.

CHAPTER VII.

INSTRUCTION.

Education.

89. There was a great advance and expansion during the year in every department of public instruction. The total number of pupils reading in all classes of public institutions increased by over 65,000, and, though examination results still show very clearly the backwardness of the Muhammadan community, a very large increase has occurred in the number of Muhammadans at school. The enforcement by the University of the new Regulations was coincident with a thorough reorganization, on the part of the Education Department, of the staffs of the Government Colleges. Liberal grants-in-aid were given to the best of the private Colleges, and the recommendations of the University's Inspectors were vigorously enforced both in Colleges and High Schools. The increasing number of pupils also shows the popular demand for institutions of a technical and industrial order. The question of female education was taken up and an advisory committee was constituted to deal with the problems connected with it. The establishment of new Lower Primary schools of an improved type and the concentration of the aid given to existing schools upon fewer and more deserving institutions continued. Three hundred and twenty-five of these new schools were established during the year, and though there was a slight diminution in the total number of Lower Primary schools, there was an increase of over 50,000 in the number of pupils.

A Central Text-Book Committee, with sub-committees for the Assam Valley, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills, was constituted, and rendered valuable assistance to the Department. Much was done during the year to better the training schools for vernacular teachers, but the facilities for training English teachers are still very imperfect, and must remain so until the opening of the proposed Training College at Dacca.

Mention must, however, be made of the injurious effect which political agitation continues to have upon the discipline of schools. The number of so-called "National schools" has increased very considerably during the year, and as a rule these institutions have been opened with the avowed object of receiving the teachers and pupils of recognised schools who refuse to submit to disciplinary measures imposed upon them by Government or the University. The fact that most of the more lawless spirits have seceded to these institutions from recognised schools accounts in a great measure for the fact that instances of indiscipline of the more violent type have been rarer in recognised schools; but the situation still remains very serious.

LITERATURE AND THE PRESS.

Literature and the Press.

90. The same lawless spirit has pervaded in a marked degree the publications of the year. Of the 43 newspapers published in this province during the year no less than three-quarters must be classed as extremist organs. The total number of books published and registered during the year was 247 against 134 in the previous year, and copyright of six books was registered. Thirty-nine of these publications were of a political nature, and books of any literary or practical value were extremely rare.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

Archæology.

91. The operations of Government for the restoration of the ancient monuments at Gaur and Pandua were finally legalised, and considerable repairs were carried out. Steps have been taken to prevent the further dilapidation of the old fort at Badarpur, and repairs to ancient buildings in Dacca and to the fort at Munshiganj were also undertaken. In Assam work was done in connection with the Dimapur Fort, and the restoration of two temples near Sibsagar was commenced.

CHAPTER IX.

MISCELLANEOUS.

VETERINARY.

Veterinary.

92. The work of the Veterinary Department has shown considerable progress during the year, and gratifying results have been obtained. But the Department still suffers from insufficiency of staff, and particularly of inspecting staff. The most serious obstacle in the way of progress is the absence of any adequate agency for reporting outbreaks of cattle disease. This means that serious epidemics frequently pass beyond the initial stage before the Department is aware of their existence. This matter is now under the consideration of Government, as well as the question of the extension of the Glanders and Farcy Act to a broader area than it now covers. Inoculation against contagion has been largely carried out with very gratifying results, and a further grant has been made to the Surma Valley Branch of the Tea Association towards the maintenance of the special veterinary establishment for inoculation purposes. The number of out-patients treated at veterinary dispensaries was double that of the previous year.

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PART II.

THE REPORT.

PART II.

THE REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1907-1908.

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ADMINISTRATION OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM, 1907-1908.

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For—

SECTION 1.—Physical Features of the Country, Area, Climate and Chief Staples.

SECTION 2.—Historical Summary.

SECTION 3.—Form of Administration.

SECTION 4.—Character of Land Tenures, System of Surveys and Settlements.

SECTION 5.—Civil Divisions of British Territory.

SECTION 6.—Details of the last Census, Tribes and Languages.

See—General Administration Report for 1905-1906, Part II, Pages 1—98.

SECTION 7.—Changes in the Administration.

1. With the sanction of the Government of India, four Additional Magistrates were posted temporarily to certain districts of Eastern Bengal, in order to relieve the serious pressure of work devolving upon the Magistrates in charge. A fifth officer was also placed on deputation to perform the duties of an Additional Magistrate in Mymensingh. The assistance thus given has proved of the greatest value to heads of districts.

2. During the year the financial powers of administrative officers were materially enlarged by the decentralization of authority to sanction expenditure. An important change in budget procedure was also inaugurated by the orders of the Government of India dated the 1st January 1908, the effect of which will be to allow each Local Government to budget under Provincial heads as it pleases, deductions being made in the Finance Department from the estimate submitted under each local head, if this should appear necessary from the circumstances of the year, but in such a way that the deductions will be shown as "probable savings" and will not operate to curtail expenditure which has been duly approved and for which provision has been made in the reduced grant.

3. With effect from the 1st January 1908, the Railway Police jurisdiction over the following lines of railways has been transferred from the province of Bengal to this province, and a general Police district embracing the lands occupied by all the lines so transferred has been created :—the Assam-Bengal Railway, the Bengal-Duars Railway (including the portion lying in the State of Cooch Behar), the Dibru-Sadiya Railway, the Mymensingh-Jamalpur-Jagannathganj Railway, the Tezpur-Balipara Railway, the Jorhat State Railway, the whole length of the Eastern Bengal State Railway lying within this province and in the State of Cooch Behar (with the exception of the portion of the line from Katihar to Godagari lying within the districts of Malda and Rajshahi and of the portion of the lines between Poradah and Goalundo, including the branch line to Faridpur), the portion of the same railway between Kachua and Barsoi stations, and the portion of the same railway between Siliguri and Darjeeling in the district of Bengal.

4. Other minor changes in /administration are noticed in the chapters dealing with the branches affected.

SECTION 8.—Frontier Relations and Feudatory States.

[See General Administration Report for 1905-1906, Part II, pages 99-107.]

SECTION 9.—Relations with Tributary States and Frontier Affairs.

Feudatory States.

MANIPUR.

[Tribute:—Rs. 50,000 annually; population (1901):—284,465; gross revenue (average for last five years):—Rs. 4,17,949. Military:—180 Military Police. Products:—Rice, dal, vegetables of various kinds, India-rubber, wax, tea-seed and other forest products, cattle, ponies and buffaloes. Manufactures:—cotton cloth (fine and coarse), silk cloth (fine and coarse), brass and other metal utensils, a few articles of ivory and ordinary Indian jewellery, some leather work, and a coarse kind of salt; Minerals:—iron-ore, limestone, copper and salt, of which only salt and limestone are now worked.

Raja:—His Highness Raja Chura Chand Singh, aged 22 years 8 months at the end of the year; caste—Kshatriya, Hindu; no heir. Principal members of family:—(1) Ramanand Singh (aged 80), Moirang Ningthow; (2) Dumbra Singh (aged 36), eldest brother and guardian of the Raja; (3) Dimbu Singh (aged 34), second brother of Raja; (4) Chandra Hash Singh (aged 31), third brother of Raja; (5) Degendra Singh (aged 22), stepbrother of Raja.]

The Raja.

5. On May 15th, 1907, the administration of the Manipur State was made over to His Highness the Raja; and a darbar consisting of one member of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Civil Service, lent to the State, and of six Manipuri members was created to advise and assist the Raja. In February 1908, His Highness was formally installed on the *gadi* by His Honour Sir Lancelot Hare, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The new system of administration has on the whole worked well. His Highness, as President of the darbar, has evinced a keen interest in the general administration of the State and has efficiently controlled the Department of Public Works, of which he is in direct charge: and the members of the Darbar who have charge of the various Departments have taken much interest in their work.

There has been a very satisfactory increase in revenue collections during the year, notably under the heads "Land Revenue" and "Forests." The expenditure of the year exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 22,065, owing to the heavy expenses connected with the installation of the Raja.

Hill tribes.

6. The hill tribes, on the whole, behaved well during the year. Punitive labour was imposed in a few cases, and the orders were executed without delay.

Five hundred and fifty-five unlicensed guns were withdrawn and destroyed during the year, the majority of which were surrendered voluntarily. About 1,500 hillmen, representing the various Naga and Kuki clans, paraded on the polo ground at Imphal before His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the occasion of his visit and gave an exhibition of dances. The total demand for house-tax from the hill tribes was Rs. 71,009, of which Rs. 67,175 was collected, leaving, after the deduction of remissions, an arrear balance of Rs. 1,404. The arrear demand from the previous year was Rs. 9,957. The hill schools have done good work in teaching Naga boys to read and write Manipuri, and so making them fit for employment under the State as peons and constables. It has been decided to discontinue the experiment of compulsory education amongst the Nagas.

General condition of the people.

7. Though the rainfall for the year was only slightly in excess of that of the previous year and much less than the average rainfall for the last ten years, it was well distributed, and the result was a bumper rice crop. Vegetables were very cheap and abundant, and more potatoes are said to be grown than formerly. The price of paddy fell from Re. 1-10 to 14 annas, but *matikalai* rose from Rs. 3-6 to Rs. 5. The prospects of the Manipur Company, Limited, which has begun operations in silk, were very promising, and individual cultivators will probably gain considerably by growing mulberry for the Company.

Civil and criminal justice.

8. Since the management of the State has been made over to His Highness the Raja and his darbar, the darbar tries all criminal cases previously tried by the Superintendent of the State, *i.e.*, all cases beyond the jurisdiction of the *Cherap*. All cases in which hillmen are concerned are tried by the Vice-President of the darbar, while any case to which a British subject is a party is tried in the Political Agent's court. There were four important murder cases against hillmen, in three of which the accused were convicted. At the beginning of the year, owing to the superior police staff being composed of new men, there were a good many cases of burglary and petty theft, but the state of things improved later on. Cattle theft is very common in the valley. There was a still further increase, by nearly 2,000, in the number of civil suits filed as compared with the previous year. Probably this is due to the same cause which gave rise to the large increase in revenue cases, *viz.*, the changes in administration

on account of which old cases have been revived by disappointed litigants. There was a decrease in the number of criminal offences dealt with during the year from 909 in 1906 to 872 in the year under report.

Medical.

9. During the year two new dispensaries were opened. There was a marked increase in the number of operations performed at the Manipur dispensary. There was a small outbreak of plague, which had not been known before in Manipur, in a Naga village. The disease is thought to have been brought from Burma. The state suffered a severe loss in the death of the Civil Surgeon from cholera early in the year.

Education.

10. Education has progressed satisfactorily. The system of fees introduced into the Johnstone School is said to have had a good effect on the pupils. A graduate of the Calcutta University has been added to the staff. Six new *pathsalas*, aided by the State, were opened in the valley and a new madrassa at Lilong. Arrangements were made for opening a small technical school at Imphal early in the current year, and it is hoped that it will be possible after some time to recruit surveyors and artisans for the State Works Department. The fourteen hill schools are doing well and the Kukis have applied for an increase in the number of the schools (three) which they at present have.

Revenue and finance.

11. There was an increase of Rs. 21,322 in the current demand, due chiefly to the re-survey of the valley. The year closed with a balance of nearly Rs. 2¾ lakhs. The expenditure was high, owing to the construction of the Raja's palace and the expenses incidental to the installation. The ordinary revenue was found equal to the demand, the reserve being reduced only by Rs. 6,079.

HILL TIPPERA.

[Area :—4,086 square miles ; Chief products :—Rice and cotton ; Population (1901) :—173,325 ; Revenue from State : —Rs. 7,85,510 ; Revenue from zamindari in British territory :—Rs. 8,55,177 ; Military force :—One regiment of 278 men ; Present Raja :—Radha Kishore Dev Barman Manikiya, born, 1858 ; family :—Indo-Chinese, but the Rajas have assumed the status of the Kshatriya caste ; residence :—Agartala ; has male heir.]

Administration.

12. During the year revenue officers were entirely relieved of their police duties, and the whole State was parcelled out into police *thanas* and *tahsil* circles, manned by separate staffs with a Superintendent at the head of each. Babu Jogesh Chandra Dutta, B.A., has been appointed Superintendent of Police after qualifying from the Dacca Police Training School. The Raja visited Bisalgar, a pargana of the sadr division, during the year, but no other tour is mentioned in the report. He spent some time in Comilla and Calcutta, and the Minister was absent from head-quarters one hundred and five days during the year. The Political Agent visited Agartala several times, and visited also four of the remaining six divisional head-quarters.

General condition of the people.

13. There was a fair outturn of *aus* paddy in all divisions except Dharmanagar, where the crop was destroyed by floods and insects : the *aman* and *boro* crops suffered from drought. Cotton, however, did well. There was no distress in any part of the State, and the price of rice was considerably lower than in the previous year. A considerable fall in the number of money bonds presented for registration may be taken as an index of prosperity. The mulberry plantation at Kasipur farm succeeded indifferently. Trade suffered considerably owing to the dried-up condition of most of the important water-routes, which resulted in considerable quantities of cotton, oilseeds, jute and timber not being exported, but there was an increase of Rs. 28,811, as compared with the previous year, in the revenue realised from export-tax on cotton and oilseeds. There was an increase of over Rs. 1,40,000 in the total income of the State, the increase coming entirely from the income derived from zamindari.

Cholera and small-pox appeared in epidemic forms in various places, but apparently the mortality was not great owing to the adoption of prompt medical measures.

The Victoria Memorial Hospital at Agartala maintained its popularity.

There was a large increase in the number of families who immigrated into the State during the year.

Police.

14. With the separation of the police and revenue collection services, the numerical staff of the police force was reduced by more than one-half, and expenditure was thus reduced to Rs. 23,762 for the police force proper. Of the cases investigated by the police 50 per cent. resulted in conviction—a slight improvement on the previous year. The constables are armed with *lathis*, and a stock of muzzle-loaders is kept for their use in emergencies.

Education.

15. The number of primary schools again shows an increase on the previous year, the total being 122, with a total of 2,821 pupils. There were also four Middle English and one High schools, the latter with 349 boys on the rolls at the end of the year. Out of 31 boys sent up from this school at the last Entrance Examination 16 passed. The Woodburn Artisan school continues to meet with very indifferent success.

Postal communication.

16. Some activity has been shown during the year in improving postal communications by arrangement with the Imperial postal authorities. Seven new offices were opened, thus securing an office at or near each headquarter station; five others are shortly to be started.

Frontier Tribes.

BHUTIAS.

Bhutias visiting Kamrup.

17. The usual fairs were held at Darranga and Subankhata during the months of January to March, and a small police guard was stationed at each place.

The attendance of Bhutias was larger than the year before, being about 2,500 at Darranga and 500 at Subankhata. In 1907 the trade of Darranga was greatly augmented by the import from the Bhutan *mahal* of lac valued at Rs. 1,30,242. Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur, the agent to the Bhutan Government, is reported to have attended the Darranga Fair.

Bhutias visiting Darrang.

18. From Bhutan proper Bhutias came down, though in smaller numbers than usual, through Udalguri and Kherkeria in the middle of January last, and returned at the end of March. The Subdivisional Officer, Mangaldai, reports that their conduct was unsatisfactory, and they are said to have committed several thefts in the Kachari villages on the frontier.

Bhutias from Towang.

19. The usual yearly *posa*, amounting to Rs. 5,000, was presented by the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang to the Gelongs of Towang at Udalguri.

The Thebengia and Charduar Bhutias received their *posa* at Tezpur, and presents were exchanged as usual.

AKAS.

Kapaschor and Hazarikhoa Akas.

20. The Kapaschor and Hazarikhoa Akas came down to take their *posa*, and the usual interchange of presents took place.

DAFLAS.

Daflas.

21. The Daflas received their *posa*, amounting to Rs. 3,119-15-10.

During the year under report several parties of Daflas—men, women, and children—came down from the hills and settled in the plains in British territory, their hill neighbours often having some imaginary grievances against one or more of them. The consequence in one case was that some hill Daflas of Tezi's *chang*, or village, raided and took away a woman with her two children from a Dafla hamlet near Laluk. Tezi Gam was ordered to return the captives, but did not do so until a relative of his who entered British territory was seized and held as a hostage.

Before this a party of Daflas had attacked two coolies employed on the Harmuti tea-garden, whom they met just beyond the Inner Line, and carried away their *daos*. The assault was not very serious, the *daos* were recovered, and the Gam was informed that their *posa* would not be paid till the guilty persons were given up for punishment. A third affray occurred on the Kakoi river, some ten miles from the station, certain Daflas making a raid upon coolies working on Lilabari gardens. The Daflas have been made to understand that, unless they surrender the persons in fault, their *posa* will not be paid.

Apa Tanangs.

No complaint of any sort was made against the Apa Tanangs during the year.

MIRIS.

Gachi, Panibotia and Tarbotia Miris.

22. These sections of the Hill Miris gave no trouble. The Subdivisional Officer reports that they come regularly into North Lakhimpur during the cold weather and that the number bringing disputes to be settled is increasing.

Sarak Miris.

This tribe behaved well during the year. They, with their Gams Tago and Kajum at their head, and with Tara Gam's widow, Mirpung, came down to take their *posa* as usual.

ABORS.

Doba Abors.

23. The Doba Abors, also known as Gallongs, behaved well throughout the year, and came in as usual to receive their *posa*.

Past Mlnyangs.

24. The people of Depi, on their own behalf and on that of Ledum, have in the past given trouble to employés of the various saw-mills. The Assistant Political Officer explained to them when on tour that interference with British subjects in the country as far as the foot of the hills would not be tolerated. They promised to give no more cause for complaint, and admitted that their village was within the British border.

Since the close of the year a report has been received of an attempt by the people of Ledum and Depi to blackmail the Manager of the Laimekuri Saw-mills. This is the only case that has come to notice since March 1907.

The result of the tours of the Assistant Political Officer was to show the existence of a much larger population on the first range of hills than had been suspected.

Bor Abors or Padama.

25. The Assistant Political Officer was unable to visit the Bor Abor villages, although a party from Dambuk invited him to do so.

26. Mr. Williamson gives the following account of the fate of a Tibetan settlement:—

> In my report for 1906-1907, I made mention of a Tibetan settlement in the Mishmi (Chulikata) country. These Tibetans were first heard of in 1904. I had been informed that, after trying to maintain their position, they had been worsted and driven out by the Mishmis. This was not correct. They were worsted, it is true, but the survivors were captured and sold by the Mishmis to the Padams as slaves. In August last I heard that some of them had been purchased by the Padams living in the villages close to our frontier. In March last four of these Tibetans attempted to escape from Dambuk. Two were caught by the Padams when trying to cross the Dibong and taken back to Dambuk. The other two reached the Military Police stockade at Bomjur just ahead of their pursuers. The officer commanding the guard prevented the Abors from capturing the refugees, whom he sent into Sadiya, where they now are. One hails from Lhassa, and the other appears to come from Darge in Eastern Tibet.

The Padam settlement at Sibiya is steadily increasing. It suffered in August from sickness, and was visited by the Rev. L. J. Jackman and Dr. Kirby, of the Mission at Sadiya, who attended to the sick. In April 1907 the Sibiya headman complained that villagers of Membo had forcibly carried off certain new settlers from Milang and Komkar, villages to the north-west of the Padam country. The headmen of Membo released the settlers as soon as it became known that a complaint had been lodged. They appeared in May before the Assistant Political Officer and excused themselves on the ground that the offence had been committed by the younger men without their knowledge. The reason for the violation of British territory was that Milang and Komkar are not permitted to trade direct with Sadiya, and the Padams feared that the presence of Milang and Komkar settlers at Sibiya would damage their position as middlemen. The Padams asked the Assistant Political Officer to prevent any more people from Milang and Komkar settling in British territory. The matter was referred to Government, who decided that all peaceful immigrants should be allowed to settle.

MISHMIS.

Chulikatas.

27. The blockade of the Chulikatas was continued throughout the year, except in the cases of certain selected villages, which in 1906 were permitted to trade at Sadiya. Members of this tribe again cleared the road between Bomjur and Nizamghat.

At the beginning of November 1907 the Assistant Political Officer visited the village of Shindaka and of E-lopa, to the east of the Dibong gorge. Shindaka lies in the low hills between Nizamghat and Dambuk, and the Assistant Political Officer found that it and other Chulikata hamlets maintain their position there without difficulty, in spite of its being said that the Dambuk Padams are in need of land.

Bebejiyas.

28. This tribe is still strictly blockaded for the murders committed in July 1905. There are no signs of the surrender of the murderers.

Digarus and Mijus.

29. In December 1907, Mr. Williamson, accompanied by Chowna Gohain, one of the principal Khamti chiefs, journeyed up the Lohit as far as Sati, the last Miju village in the direction of Tibet. He relied on local transport, which was supplied without difficulty by the various headmen who gave him a hospitable welcome. The journey lasted six weeks.

KHAMTIS AND SINGPHOS.

Khamtis and Singphos.

30. The Khamtis gave no trouble either in North Lakhimpur or on the North-East frontier. The conduct of this tribe was good.

PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

NAGAS.

Margherita Nagas, Yogis and Rangpangs.

31. In the Frontier Tribes Report for 1906-1907, a case was mentioned in which a Singpho and a Rangpang Naga kidnapped a coolie for sale as a slave. They were sent to jail, where they died. In October 1907 a raid was committed on the Sarkari Naga hamlet of Wakpang, just inside the British border on the Upper Tirap. The raiders killed at night seven people out of the twelve who were in the village at the time and carried off two guns, the heads of the persons killed, and some beads. The assailants are said to have been Rangpang Nagas from the village of Halun, whose motive was revenge for the death of the Rangpang Nagas in jail, but the facts are not quite clear. The Deputy Commissioner sent a messenger to the Rajas of Halun and Rasi villages, with demands for the surrender of the raiders, with the guns, beads, and heads. The messenger returned with the guns, and stated that the wife of Pabun, a Singpho chief, had sent four men to Rasi and Ranra, with orders that the heads, guns and beads were to be sent in as well as the murderers. The four men returned to her, and said that the suspects denied taking beads or heads, and had absconded after surrendering the guns. Enquiries are now in progress.

Jovpur Nagas, Borduarias, Namsangyand Bormithunias.

32. These tribes behaved well during the year. Some Borduaria Nagas brought cases against the managers of tea estates for non-payment of their dues for cutting jungle. All these cases were carefully enquired into; some were found true, and some were not proved.

Nagas on the Sibsagar border.

33. During the year the Chiefs of three *changs*, Joboka, Kongon, and Banfera, paid visits to the Deputy Commissioner, and the usual presents were exchanged.

Thirteen Nagas were convicted of committing offences in the sadr subdivision of Sibsagar, eight in two cases for cattle theft, two for other thefts, and three for illegal possession of hill *ganja* with intent to sell. The last three were punished with fine, two of the others with whipping, and the remainder with imprisonment.

Complaints of theft from tea gardens were less frequent during the year. A path from Kongon and Jaktung villages, which used to pass through Santak tea garden and factory, was closed early in the year and an older path along the bank of the Dikhu was cleared instead. A small police force was stationed at Santak for a few days to see that the new path was used, and no thefts have since been reported from Santak garden.

NAGA HILLS.

34. Relations with the tribes on the borders were generally friendly during the year. At different times during the year the trans-Dikhu villages of Yanpi, Mongdi and Longra asked to be taken under British protection.

In January two Khonoma traders were murdered and robbed by one of the villages of the Somra group of Tangkuls. The question of controlling Somra and other villages on the Manipur frontier is under consideration. The Semas across the Tizu continued friendly and assisted Mr. Dundas with supplies when he went to punish Kehomi in April last. Kehomi was responsible for the murder of five traders of Seromi at a spot within a day's march of the British frontier. The village was first called upon to pay a fine of five *mithan* and on its refusal Mr. Dundas, accompanied by Captain Bliss and 80 rifles of the Military Police, proceeded thither and burnt it. This punishment has had the usual good effect, and the headmen of Kehomi have since sent in messages to Mr. Dundas asking to be allowed to come in and see him at Mokokchang. As their road lay through many unfriendly independent villages and it was impossible to provide a safe-conduct for them, Mr. Dundas considered it inadvisable for them to risk their lives. The big Yachumi village of Sapur also sent in a message asking to be allowed to come into Mokokchang, but here also a similar difficulty occurred. The Mozungjami expedition of 1906 having failed to secure the surrender of the murderers, the Pelasi khel of that village were debarred from entering British territory. Eventually they were allowed to purchase peace by paying thirty *mithan* as compensation. They paid one instalment but failed to pay the second, which was due in February 1908. The case awaits the orders of the Government of India on the question of forming an area of political control. Certain cases have been reported in which trans-Dikhu raiders have violated the boundaries and crossed the British borders with the object either of facilitating their escape when hard pressed or of furthering plans for raiding.

35. The Subdivisional Officer, Mokokchang, reports the following occurrences across the frontier. At the same time he mentions that they probably form only a small part of the raiding which is continually going on across the Tizu, because only the occurrences which happen in close proximity to the frontier come to knowledge.

TRANS-TIZU.

A.—In June 1907 Ghovishe, with 400 Semas from his own village, Melomi Litsemi and five other Sema villages, raided Horomi and took three heads, wounded three men, who subsequently died, and burnt the village.

B.—In October a Yachumi trader was murdered in Ghovishe's village.

C.—In October three men of Yemithi murdered and took the head of a man named Beri of Mizishi's village. This has caused the abandonment of Mizishi's village.

D.—In November Ghokwi, Chief of Lhoshapu, demanded tribute from Yetsimi. The Yetsimi men refused saying that they were under Nikhui's protection. Ghokwi sent a raiding party and murdered two men, taking one head. Nikhui in revenge sent a raiding party to old Yetsimi, which is under Lhoshapu's protection, and took a head. This nearly caused a fight between Nikhui and Lhoshapu, in which British villages would certainly have joined, because Lhoshapu is the only Zhumomi village across the border and has influential and powerful friends on the British side.

E.—In January last five men of Akia lay in wait near the water-supply of Tsingami, killed two women, and wounded a third.

TRANS-DIKHU.

A.—In April Litam and Noksen raided Alisibo in their *arrahs* and took four heads, including that of a *gaonbura*.

B.—In April some men of Longra found two Yangpi women near Mongdi and took both their heads.

C.—In October Litam and Noksen and seven other Mozung villages, with the Chongpu and Pelasi khel of Mozungjami, raided Alisibo and took six heads, but in the retreat they lost three of their own and also dropped two of the heads they had taken. Four *khels* of Char joined in pursuit, entered British territory, and killed a Mozung on Longmisa land. Char was fined four *mithan* for this.

D.—In January last, Yazim, Yongia, Niang, Tangsa, Kamahu, Yang and Longra attacked Yangpi. Yangpi, was however, ready and beat back the attack, taking 74 heads with a loss of only one man. The total killed was between 120 and 140; as many more died in the jungle. The raiders returned through British territory.

The Deputy Commissioner represents that in the absence of a sphere of control he is often placed in an embarrassing position when villages beyond the frontier appeal to him to settle their disputes.

GARO HILLS.

Sonaram's agitation.

36. Sonaram continued his agitation. The movement of which this man is leader took its origin many years ago in a claim for certain lands in the district of Goalpara which due and full judicial proceedings showed to be baseless. During this year he has collected money all over the north of the Garo Hills, and one Laskar was imprisoned for making over to him some money which he received for distribution to his raiyats for the up-keep of a road. Certain Nokmas have even sold their property to provide Sonaram with money. The Deputy Commissioner reports that people seem to be in terror of Sonaram and give money for that reason, even when they feel no enthusiasm for the movement. It is commonly believed that Sonaram's campaign of agitation will ultimately succeed, and that in this event those who withheld their assistance will be deprived of their land.

Trade in lac.

37. The enhanced rates of revenue on lac, which first came into force during the year under report, are said to have caused great discontent among the purchasers from other districts. At one place the Forest Officers were opposed and lac was removed without payment. The offenders were later prosecuted and punished. A small party of civil police was stationed at Karkutta for some months during the lac season to maintain order.

Education.

38. Sonaram's agitation continued to interfere with the progress of education among the Garos, and the dissatisfaction with the system of paying teachers by results at one time became acute, but the Deputy Commissioner reports that by the close of the year the discontent had abated and that a more healthy spirit prevailed in the Mission schools.

PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

LUSHAI HILLS.

Delimitation of the southern boundary.

39. In accordance with the orders of the Government of India for the punishment of the village of Zongling, lying in the unadministered tract south of Sherkor, on account of certain outrages committed in the previous year, Major Cole, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, proceeded to Zongling, accompanied by Colonel Loch and an escort of 100 Military Police, and reached that village on the 15th December. A fine of Rs. 500 was realised in guns, 20 of which were given up within 24 hours. On Christmas Day the Superintendent met the Burma Officers, Mr. Thom, Superintendent of the North Arracan Hill Tracts, and Mr. Street, Superintendent of the Chin Hills at Lakhi, a village a day's march south of Zongling. During the succeeding days proposals were discussed and formulated for the delimitation of the southern boundary of the Lushai Hills and for the administration of the tract lying between that boundary and the Arracan Hill Tracts. These were submitted by the officers concerned to their respective Governments.

Guard at Sherkor.

40. The removal of the South Vanlaiphai outpost to a point about six miles south of Sherkor village resulted in complete immunity from any further attempts at oppression during the year. The site having been found unhealthy and unsuitable, the guard was subsequently moved to Sherkor village. The change in no way affects the political value of the post. The opportunity was taken, on the party entering the unadministered tract, to survey a large area of country hitherto unmapped. Apart from the Zongling affair the year was devoid of political incident. The construction of the Aijal-Sairang cart-road is rapidly progressing. It is reported that the road will be open for traffic in April 1909.

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS.

Demarcation of boundary.

41. In February 1907 an officer was deputed from this province to meet an officer of the Burma Government in order to demarcate a boundary between the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the district of Akyab in Burma. The boundary had never before been properly demarcated, with the result that considerable encroachments were made into the Hill Tract territory by people paying revenue to the Akyab authorities. The recommendations of the special officers were accepted by the two Governments and a line following the watershed of the Myothit river has been demarcated as the boundary.

Outrages at Ruma.

42. In May 1907 a gang of Maghs living within the jurisdiction of the Ruma policestation—an outlying independent outpost on the Sangu river—combined under the leadership of one Aukhoy, who believed as the result of a dream that it was his fate to become a ruling chief, and murdered a head-constable and a constable from the Ruma outpost, taking a rifle and some ammunition which the police had with them. A few days later the same gang armed with guns attacked and fired the station buildings, shot another head-constable dead and wounded a writer head-constable and a constable. The miscreants subsequently looted a quantity of valuable property from a shop in the bazar close by and decamped. In connection with the first outrage 11 persons were sent up, of whom 9 were committed to the sessions, two being pardoned as approvers. Two of the accused were sentenced to death, three to transportation for life and the remaining four acquitted. In the second case, 44 persons were committed to the sessions and 24 were ultimately tried, the charges against the other 20 having been withdrawn for various reasons. Twenty persons were convicted, and sentenced, 5 to transportation for life, and 15 to various terms of rigorous imprisonment, ranging from three to ten years. Six absconders who took a leading part in the attack on the police station have subsequently been arrested across the Burma border where they had been living as outlaws.

43. During the year the Public Demands Recovery Act, I (B.C.) of 1895, was extended in a modified form to the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.

[Consisting of twenty-five States:—Bhowal, Cherra, Shella, Khyrim, Mylliem, Langrin, Maharam, Mawiang, Maosanram, Malaisohmat, Mariaw, Nobosohphoh, Nongkhlaw, Nongspung, Nongstoin, Rambrai, Jirang, Dwara Nongtyrmen, Maodon, Maolong, Pomsangut, Lyngiong, Mauphlang, Nonglwai, and Sohiong. Total population, 202,250.]

44. The presence of the police guard at Shella had the effect of keeping this State quiet during the year. The people of Shilliang-Umiam have submitted to the Siem of Mylliem, and no further trouble has occurred.

Police guard at Shella.

45. For the demarcation of the boundary between the two States of Khyrim and Mylliem, a darbar was held on the 30th June 1907 in the Laban market place, in which U Dakhor Sing, U Ron Sing, their Myntries, and the Deputy Commissioner were present. The Siem of Mylliem objected to the demarcation. A proposal was made to refer the matter to a *panchayat*, but as there were several objections from both States, the matter was dropped for the present.

Boundary between Khyrim and Mylliem.

46. The Sohrarim boundary question again engaged the attention of the Government during the year. On the night of the 14th July 1907 the Mawmihthied boundary pillar, erected under orders of the Deputy Commissioner, was demolished, together with some of the pillars of the Nongkynrih clan. Careful enquiries by the police failed to show the actual authors of the damage. The Siem of Nongkhlaw was directed by the Commissioner to enquire into the matter. A perfunctory enquiry was made by the Siem's nephew, which failed to throw any further light on the matter. The village of Sohrarim was fined five hundred rupees in addition to paying the cost of re-erecting the pillar, and the Siem was directed to realise the fine in three instalments ending in March 1910.

Sohrarim boundary.

A *hât* was held at Sohrarim in September last, in defiance of Government orders, but it was promptly stopped. Since this, Sohrarim village has been partly destroyed by an accidental fire.

47. For many years a dispute existed between the Siem of Khyrim and the people of 25 villages of his State situated in the direction of, and on the slopes towards, Sylhet. The dispute had its origin in attempted illegal exactions by the Siem and his unfairness in the administration of justice. Riots and the imminence of further breaches of the peace necessitated the establishment of a police outpost in these villages; and though attempts were made from time to time by officers of Government to bring about an amicable settlement of the differences between the Siem and his people, the 25 villages remained refractory till the end of 1902, when they were reconciled to the Siem, and an agreement embodying the conditions was signed and ratified by the Deputy Commissioner. Their relations with the Siem had since then been very satisfactory till 1907, when they became strained owing to a misunderstanding with U Rong Sardar, one of the four Sardars of the Confederacy, which culminated in a riot at Smit, the capital of the State, to which U Rong was summoned to answer certain charges against him. The incident caused much heart-burning on both sides, but it is hoped that a conciliatory and sympathetic policy on the part of the Siem will result in the restoration of good feeling.

Khyrim State.

48. U Duba Sing, Siem of Rambrai, died on the 11th November 1907, and U Hari was duly elected Siem by the State electors at Rambrai.

Rambrai State.

49. There has been a long-standing boundary dispute between the Siems of Nongstoin and Langrin about a village called Nongbasi. The Deputy Commissioner visited the place in February, and found that it was situated in Nongstoin territory.

Nongstoin and Langrin.

50. The Cherra State was quiet throughout the year, and U Roba Singh, Siem, behaved very well. One of the chief events of the year was the cremation on the 5th and 6th March 1908 of the remains of the late U Ram Singh, Siem, who died on the 23rd July 1875. U Roba Sing, the present Siem, took a loan of Rs. 15,000 from Government for the purpose, and the ceremony was performed with much pomp. The orderly behaviour of the crowd, numbering about 10,000, may, in the Deputy Commissioner's opinion, be taken as an indication that the ceremony met the wishes of the people, and that they are in sympathy with U Roba Sing.

Cherra State.

51. The Siems whose general attitude both to Government and their people has impressed Government most favourably during the year have been U Roba Sing of Cherra, U Suna Sing of Nongstoin, and U Dakhor Sing of Khyrim, while the chief of those whose attitude has been less meritorious are U Kison Sing of Maharam, U Ron Singh of Mylliem, and Raja U Kine Sing of Nongkhlaw.

Conduct of Siems.

52. For the first time in the history of the Jaintia Hills, a Christian,—U Dalington Gatphoh,—was elected Daloi in place of U Khro, late Daloi of Jowai, who resigned, finding that he had lost the confidence of his people. In the election held for a new Daloi, U Dalington Gatphoh secured an overwhelming number of votes, both from Christians and men of other persuasions.

Jowai.

PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

SECTON 10.—Condition of the People.

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of EasternBengal and Assam for 1907-1908.]

Prices of food and labour.

53. The prices of food-grains ruled very high in all districts throughout the year, though there was in general some reduction as compared with the extraordinarily high prices of the preceding year. Among the causes which have led to the continuance of high prices are the short outturn of crops, the extension of jute cultivation, and the retention of large stocks by dealers and cultivators in the hope of a still better market. There was a noticeable fall in the price of salt, due to the reduction of duty.

Not much variation in the wages of common labourers is reported. In Dinajpur, Malda, and Kamrup there was some rise due to the demand for labour for railway work, and there are complaints of the difficulty of obtaining labour from Sylhet and Nowgong. There was nowhere any appreciable change in the wages of skilled labour.

Material condition of the people.

54. The predominant feature of the year under report was the continued high price of rice and other food-grains, and the heavy fall in the price of jute. The majority of cultivators seem to have profited by the experience of the previous year, and to have kept a sufficient stock of rice for home consumption, thus rendering themselves independent of the market. Labourers are said to have been able to demand wages that protected them against the high prices. As in the previous years, the people who suffered most were those of the lower middle class who live on fixed incomes. Loans were freely given to such cultivators as required money for seed and cattle.

Very few local calamities are reported to have occurred during the year. In Bakarganj there was a severe outbreak of cattle disease, chiefly affecting buffaloes. In one mauza in Nowgong the *ahu* crop was carried away by floods, while poor mustard and pulse crops added to the distress. This was relieved by loans and by a suspension of 50 per cent. of the land revenue demand.

The high prices obtained by the growers of rice, especially in the Assam Valley, are likely to affect the condition of the people. The Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, remarks :—"Formerly the raiyat grew and stored food. This art he well understood. Now a great deal of the food (owing to high demand, improved communications, etc.) has been turned into cash, and the raiyat has much to learn in the management of his money." The Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup is of opinion that the high prices were to some extent responsible for an increase in the consumption of opium. The tenants on Government estates in Eastern Bengal are reported to be better off than their neighbours on private estates.

Public health.

55. Public health was in general good throughout the year. In many districts, however, there was more cholera than usual, owing to insufficient rainfall in the winter and spring. Noakhali suffered especially from cholera and fever; in Dinajpur the mortality from fever was extraordinary. There were severe outbreaks of cholera and small-pox in Goalpara, and in Sibsagar dysentery and fever were more prevalent than usual. The inquiry at present being made into the causes of black-water fever and malaria in the Eastern Duars is already bearing fruit, inasmuch as the number of cases of malaria on tea-gardens shows a considerable decrease.

CHAPTER II.—ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND.

SECTION I.—Realisation of the Revenue.

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

56. An account of the year's demand, collections, and balance of land revenue will be found under "Chapter V.—Revenue and Finance."

Remittances of revenue and rent by money-order.

57. The number of revenue money-orders and the amount of land revenue and cesses remitted by them increased from 184,275 and Rs. 8,63,929 in the preceding year to 191,245 and Rs. 9,88,945, respectively, in the year under report, which indicates that the system is slowly growing in popularity. As in the previous years the remittances in each of the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur and Chittagong exceeded a lakh of rupees. The system is in force throughout Eastern Bengal and in Sylhet.

Payment of rent by money-order is permitted in the Eastern Bengal districts alone. The number of money-orders issued for this purpose during the year increased by 983, the increase occurring in four districts only, *viz.*, Dacca, Faridpur, Chittagong and Noakhali. The percentage of refusal of money-orders by landlords rose in all districts except Faridpur, Noakhali, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Malda. The system is unpopular with zamindars and their *amla*, and its use is generally discouraged by them.

Coercive measures in Eastern Bengal. (a) Operation of the sale law.

58. Out of 7,237 estates and shares which became liable to sale for non-payment of Government dues, in comparison with 6,883 in the previous year, the percentage actually sold was 7·8, against 4·2 in the previous year, and the price realised was on the average 7·4 times the Government revenue of the properties sold against 4·7 times in the preceding year. Appeals against sales were preferred to the Commissioners in 67 cases, of which 22 were successful. Recommendation for annulment of sale on the ground of hardship was made to Government in 7 cases only. The most noticeable increase both of defaults and sales occurred in the Chittagong district, and was mainly due to the fact that the *mahals* which were not sold in the previous year for trifling arrears had to be brought to sale during the year under report on account of repeated defaults. The percentages of sales on defaults varied from ·8 to 19·5, and in three districts only exceeded 10 per cent. These figures indicate that the sale law was administered with leniency and moderation.

(b) Certificate procedure.

59. The total number of certificates filed—41,688—showed an increase of nearly 7,000 on the previous year. The increase is accounted for entirely by the certificate procedure of the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions. In the Dacca district the increase was over 1,000, and in the districts of Faridpur and Mymensingh it was little short of that figure. Realisation of partition costs and of fines imposed under the Land Registration Act, and the failure of voluntary payment of rent owing to the high price of food-grains, are quoted as the chief reasons for this increase. In the Rajshahi Division, it is satisfactory to note, the number of certificate cases filed decreased in all the districts except Bogra and Malda. The percentage of certificates disposed of on the total number for disposal was 73·5, against 71·2 in the preceding year. There was a further decrease in the percentage of disposals in the Dacca Division, which was due mainly to an increase in the number of institutions in the latter part of the year. As in the previous year, the greater proportion of the demands was satisfied on the issue of notices or on attachment of property, and recourse to actual sale was necessary only in a few cases.

The administration of the certificate department was on the whole satisfactory.

(c) Realisation by imprisonment.

60. The number of persons imprisoned during the year for the realisation of Government demands increased to 6 from 1 in the previous year. These cases were in two districts only, *viz.*, 5 in Chittagong and 1 in Pabna. The imprisonment failed in its object in two instances in the Chittagong district.

Coercive measures under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

61. There was a slight decrease in the total number of estates against which notices of demand were issued. The experiment of dispensing with the issue of notices of demand under section 68 of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation and issuing warrants at once was continued in selected areas during the year, and the procedure appears to have proved convenient everywhere, so far as the collection of revenue is concerned. The number of cases in which property had to be attached and sold shows an increase in the Surma Valley. This is due to the fact that in 1906-1907 coercive processes were sparingly issued in the Jaintia parganas in Sylhet, owing to distress resulting from short crops and cattle-disease. In the Assam Valley, on the

other hand, the number shows a considerable decrease, due to improvement in collections in Sibsagar, where the mauzadars exercised their personal influence in the matter of revenue collection more effectively than in the previous year. At the same time too many processes are still issued at the instance of the mauzadars, and the question of restricting them is still engaging the attention of the Board.

Orders for ejectment after annulment of settlement were issued only in the district of Kamrup, and they were in all cases, except two, carried out by the Land Record staff. In these two cases help had been taken from the police—an unfortunate necessity which is avoided whenever other means can be found to enforce the orders of the Revenue authorities.

Processes.

62. The number of processes served during the year exceeded that of the previous year by nearly 50,000, the general increase being attributed to the inception of cess-revaluation proceedings and the issue of notice for the recovery of agricultural loans. The experiment of serving processes through the presidents of village *panchayats*, which had been initiated in two districts in 1906, was maintained during the year but has not proved successful up to date. The matter was discussed at the recent conference of Commissioners, and it was decided to give the system a further trial, and to see whether improvements could not be effected in it which would secure more speedy delivery and a larger proportion of personal service.

The total sum realised from fees exceeded the cost of serving the processes by Rs. 77,365, and it was found necessary to remit only Rs. 2,646 of the fees due, as compared with Rs. 11,702 in the previous year. The question of cost of process serving calls for careful inquiry, inasmuch as very great variations are shown in the returns of different districts. The matter will be taken up in connection with the schemes which have been set on foot for the amalgamation of all process-serving establishments and their more efficient supervision and control.

Miscellaneous land revenue.

63. The receipts under miscellaneous land revenue were mainly derived from fisheries, minerals, house-tax, partition fees and survey and settlement charges recoverable. The total miscellaneous land revenue demand on current and arrear accounts was Rs. 11,85,328. The percentages of collections, which showed a decided improvement over those of the preceding two years, was 98·8 on the current demand and 94·1 on the arrear demand. The most important item in the current year was the recovery of survey and settlement charges, and almost the whole of the total of Rs. 6,82,000 estimated as the probable recoveries of the year was due from the district of Bakarganj. The operations undertaken for the recovery of this large sum were conspicuously successful, the whole of the arrears of Rs. 1,71,425 being paid in, and the recoveries on current account exceeding the estimate by nearly Rs. 55,000. The most satisfactory feature of this very successful realisation is the fact that it was effected with very little use of coercive measures, the anxiety of the people to obtain the copies of the records, which were given to them as soon as they had paid their dues, proving sufficient inducement to ensure prompt payment. The demand from other unclassified miscellaneous items amounted to Rs. 1,20,000, the chief item being Rs. 80,000 on account of the sale of surplus railway lands in the district of Tippera. Practically the whole amount was collected within the year.

Sale of Government lands.

64. The only sale of proprietary rights in Government estates that took place during the year was that of a piece of land measuring one *bigha*, that remained out of the piece of land acquired in 1895 for the police station at Sarupkati in the Bakarganj district, the remainder of the land having been washed away by the river. The sale was effected with the former proprietor of the land for Rs. 75, the highest bid offered. Certain A and B-class Railway lands were also sold for an aggregate sum of rather over Rs. 8,00,000.

Redemption of land revenue.

65. Only two estates in the district of Chittagong were redeemed during the year under the orders of Government. The number of petty estates formed by partition and redeemed under section 11 of the old Partition Act, VIII (B.C.) of 1876, was 53 (all in the district of Dacca) against 4 in the previous year. The increase was due to the fact that some heavy cases pending under the old Act were disposed of during the year. There was no redemption of land revenue in Assam.

Land Registration. (a) Under Act VII (B.C.) of 1876.

66. By far the greatest proportion of the proceedings under this Act are conducted in the district of Chittagong, where there are no fewer than 387,552 proprietary interests entered in the registers, as compared with 270,600 in all the other districts of Eastern Bengal taken together. A special establishment is maintained in this district for land registration work, while in other districts it is carried out by the ordinary collectorate staff. The number of applications for registration increased from 26,177 to 36,766, the Chittagong district alone accounting for an increase of over

9,000. The total number of interests registered increased during the year from 658,157 to 663,365. The number of applications granted amounted to 4·56 per cent. on the total number of interests registered. Registration fees amounted for the year to Rs. 662, and the total expenditure on land registration to over Rs. 17,000, of which over Rs. 15,000 is debitable to the Chittagong district. No cases of fraudulent registration were reported.

(b) Under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

67. The number of cases disposed of locally by summary procedure fell by over 20,000, the decrease being shared by all districts except Cachar. The greatest decrease was in Sylhet where there was an abnormal increase in the previous year. As the summary procedure has only recently been introduced into Sylhet it is probable that the mutations of last year included a great many that had been awaiting registration for some time, and the fall in figures may accordingly indicate merely a return to normal conditions. The system of summary procedure in general is new and has scarcely had time to get into regular working order: steps are being taken to simplify it and to make it more popular.

Partition. (a) Eastern Bengal.

68. In Eastern Bengal the number of pending cases at the close of the preceding year was 197, and of institutions during the year 47, making a total of 244. The number of cases disposed of was 58 as compared with 41 in the previous year. Of these partitions were allowed in 45 only, *viz.*, 32 in the Dacca division and 13 in the Rajshahi division; the remainder were struck off. In the Dacca and Mymensingh districts a special Deputy Collector is in charge of partition work, and in Mymensingh a Sub-Deputy Collector was also deputed for five months to assist in clearing off accumulated arrears. No special officer was employed in any other district. The average cost per acre of partitions completed during the year was Re. 1-0-7 in Dacca and Re. 1-1-4 in Mymensingh, against Re. 0-12-8 and Re. 1-2-9, respectively, in the previous year. The increase in Dacca is reported to be due to the unusual delay in disposing of the partition cases on account of the litigious propensities of the proprietors. No application is reported to have been struck off during the year under section 11 of Act V (B.C.) of 1897. The new Act is reported to be an improvement on the old, but it has been found that section 88 requires modification as unnecessary hardship is often caused to parties by cases being struck off at an advanced stage and after expenditure of heavy sums of money because of possibly small title disputes.

(b) Assam.

Omitting summary partitions effected on the spot under rule 803 of the Assam Land Records Manual, the increase in the number of applications for partition (from 234 to 270) was slight, and occurred chiefly in Sylhet and Sibsagar. But the percentage of disposals shows a marked falling off which is not satisfactory.

Land acquisition.

69. A total area of 2,600 acres was acquired for public purposes at a cost of Rs. 3,64,024. Of this area, 1,706 acres were in the Eastern Bengal districts and 894 acres in Assam. The most important project confirmed by the Board during the year was the acquisition of land for the improvement of the Madaripur *bhîl* route between the rivers Keman and Madhumati in Faridpur. The average cost per acre of the lands aquired was Rs. 139, or excluding more costly projects, Rs. 118, these figures being considerably lower than those of the previous year, when the high value of the lands acquired in the town of Dacca brought up the average. Proceedings were closed during the year for the following among other projects—in Dacca for the extension of the new civil station, for the establishment of a municipal conservancy tramway, and for the extension of the Medical School, and in Chittagong, for the improvement of the port and for acquisition of sites for Government House and staff quarters. The question of simplifying and shortening land acquisition procedure is receiving the consideration of Government.

Loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act.

70. Very little advantage is taken at present by land-owners of the provisions of this Act and only one loan of Rs. 1,000 was issued during the year. The amount due on account of outstanding loans was reduced from Rs. 14,698 to Rs. 10,935. The interest on this sum which fell due in the course of the year amounted to Rs. 854, and a sum of Rs. 1,039 was the balance due from previous years on the same account. Collections realised Rs. 1,415, and deducting Rs. 380 for remissions and suspensions, a balance of Rs. 98 remained outstanding at the close of the year.

Loans under the Agriculturists' Loans Act.

71. The agricultural conditions of the year under report proved more favourable than those of the preceding year, and consequently the demand for loans under this Act was much smaller. Rather over two lakhs was advanced to cultivators—or less than one-fourth of the sum advanced in the preceding year. For the same reason collections were fairly successful. The outstanding balance of the previous year, added to the advances of the year, made a total debit of Rs. 11,30,390, of which sum Rs. 7,42,597

were repayable within the year. Collections actually amounted to Rs. 4,36,237. The outstanding balance remaining to be collected amounts to Rs. 6,92,038. In most cases loans were granted on joint bonds executed by several villagers together. The loans are said to have been of great assistance and to have been highly appreciated.

Co-operative Credit Societies.

72. During the year very satisfactory progress has been made in organising and extending Co-operative Credit Societies. The system is still more or less in its infancy in this province, but the Registrar's report shows that its success is assured. The societies are divided into three classes, (*a*) Central Banks, (*b*) Urban Societies, and (*c*) Rural Societies. There are no Central Banks, properly so-called, in this province, *i.e.*, societies which exist only for the purpose of financing other societies, and do not advance loans to their members. During the year under report the number of the urban societies increased from twelve to twenty-one, while the number of rural societies rose from 48 to no less than 114. But almost more gratifying than the increase in the number of societies is the fact that there was a very marked increase during the year in the capital at the credit of the old societies which were existing at the close of the previous year. This is a clear indication of that public confidence in the movement which is the first condition essential to its growth and success. While the number of members belonging to rural societies increased by 215 per cent. the capital at their credit increased 541 per cent.

73. The primary business of the urban banks should be to control and finance the rural banks in the neighbourhood. It is satisfactory to note that there has been a remarkable development of this branch of their business during the year, inasmuch as five urban banks issued 35 loans to 33 rural societies for periods ranging from one to five years at rates of interest fluctuating from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. The sum thus advanced in loans was over Rs. 22,000, and the interest and instalments of the principal have been punctually paid. There was noteworthy improvement also in the deposit business of the urban societies, but the deposits paid in represented rather the investments of part of the capital of the richer than the savings of the poorer members. The loans to members granted by urban societies have been generally recovered with praiseworthy punctuality : thus, of Rs. 45,406 outstanding in loans to members at the beginning of the year, Rs. 30,005 was recovered during the year, and the balance was not due at the close of the year. Over Rs. 1,14,000 was issued in loans to members during the year under report. Of Rs. 560 outstanding by way of interest at the beginning of the year all but Rs. 77 was recovered. The Noakhali Urban Bank opened a Co-operative Stores branch for the supply of the common food materials at a rate very slightly above the wholesale cost price, a bonus of 2 per cent. being paid to customers out of the profits. It is to be hoped that this interesting and useful venture will be imitated by other societies. It should be noted that in the year under report the volume of business done by the urban societies was twelve times greater than that done in 1904-1905—the year of their inception.

74. A very interesting experiment was made in the Dewanganj thana of the Mymensingh district in the formation of five societies financed entirely by Government with advances under the Agricultural Loans Act. Inquiries as the result of certain disturbances disclosed the fact that almost every cultivator in the locality was heavily indebted, but the loans granted to each society were sufficient to free every member from his debts. Each member executed a bond mortgaging to the society the whole of his landed property, which acted as a security against his loans and ensured his being unable to have recourse again to the professional money-lender who had been his ruin. The interest charged to members for loans in these five societies is $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. which is trifling compared with the rates—varying from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 600 per cent. per annum—which they had been in the habit of paying to their *mahajan*. It may be noted that there is a case on record of a cultivator being sued for Rs. 721 as representing his accumulated indebtedness on a loan of Rs. 15 borrowed 3 years previously.

75. The loans issued by the rural societies numbered 3,772, as against 1,401 in the previous year, and the total value of the loans showed an increase of over 400 per cent. In the case of both the urban and rural societies the bulk of the loans were taken with the object of clearing off previous debts, and this is bound to be the case for some time to come. There were, however, a very satisfactory number of loans spent in the purchase of cattle and miscellaneous agricultural purposes, and it is gratifying to note that only a little over 1 per cent. of the total amount of loans granted by rural societies were spent unproductively on marriage, *shradh*, and other social or religious ceremonies. The committees of the rural societies, who are entirely unfettered in this respect, are to be congratulated on the discretion and judgment they exhibited in

granting loans. Repayments of loans were generally very regular, and little difficulty was experienced in realising arrears.

76. All the urban societies, and all save one of the rural societies, showed a profit on the year's working, and over Rs. 3,000 was paid by the two classes of societies into their reserve funds. The audit of accounts disclosed no instances of dishonesty, nor were there any disputes in any society; but there is room for considerable improvement in the care shown in keeping accounts. Difficulty was still experienced in finding efficient men to work as controllers of the societies.

It is satisfactory to note that the prejudices due chiefly to ignorance, which at their commencement threw such obstacles in the path of the development of these societies, are steadily passing away; the great obstacle to progress at present is naturally the professional money-lender, but with the growing understanding and appreciation of the movement now being shown by the general public, even his obstructive influence is steadily decreasing.

SECTION 2.—Surveys and Settlements.

[*See* Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year ending the 30th September 1907.]

77. In February 1907, the Departments of Land Records and Agriculture were separated, and a separate Director was placed in charge of each Department. Only those settlements in which no special staff is engaged now remain outside the purview of the Department of Land Records. For practical purposes the area with which the Department is concerned may be taken as roughly 76,000 square miles, of which about 50,000 square miles are settled (either permanently or temporarily) and 26,000 square miles are unsettled. Up to now a survey and record-of-rights have been completed in respect of 6,000 square miles in Eastern Bengal and of 8,500 square miles in Assam. The task before the Department is to prepare a survey and record-of-rights for the entire settled area of both portions of the province, and after such preparation to keep the maps and records up to date by means of a village agency in which the people may have confidence. Administration.

The scheme for the reorganisation of the survey arrangements of this province is now under consideration of the Government of India. The scheme contemplates a separate Superintendent of Provincial Surveys and a separate Drawing Office.

78. In every district some survey and settlement has been effected, and there is not a district in which some attempt is not made to keep the record up to date in so far as it relates to Government estates and to estates under the Court of Wards. But survey and settlement operations on a large scale were confined during the year to the districts of Faridpur and Bakarganj in Eastern Bengal, and Darrang and Nowgong in Assam. A commencement was also made in the survey of the district of Jalpaiguri. In Bakarganj the final record-of-rights for three-fourths of the district had been completed by the close of the year under report, and it is hoped that the case-work remaining to be dealt with under sections 105 and 106 of the Bengal Tenancy Act will terminate in the current year. Nearly 99 per cent. of the sum of over 5 lakhs of rupees which was paid up by the people in the realisation of the costs of the settlement proceedings was recovered without resort to any coercive process. As an indication of the benefits that have been conferred upon this district by the settlement operations, it has been recorded that there has been a decrease of some 50 per cent. in the number of rioting cases since the preparation of the record-of-rights. Work of the year. (a) Eastern Bengal.

The work of cadastral survey and *khanapuri* made great progress in the district of Faridpur, but it was found impossible to carry out the programme as arranged. It has been decided in consequence to postpone attestation to the second year of operations. A scheme has been sanctioned for the establishment of an additional party for Mymensingh, with a view to the speedy pacification of the district, and the traverse survey of the Jamalpur subdivision has already begun.

The transfer of the control of all petty settlements to the Director of Land Records will secure greater efficiency in their conduct and supervision, which, as was found in the case of settlements in Malda and Rajshahi, was badly needed. The subordinate establishments of both the Survey and the Settlement Departments have been completely readjusted, a change which was necessitated by the handing over of the whole work of cadastral survey to the Settlement Department.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND.

(b) Assam.

79. In Assam, good progress was made in the re-settlement of the districts of Darrang and Nowgong, the work in the latter district being now practically complete. In the matter of the attestation of the assessment of the land revenue before the proceedings are finally concluded, arrangements are now being made to communicate to the tenants the actual effect of the assessment upon the total rental of each holding before the final rent-roll is drawn up, and to give them an opportunity before the proceedings terminate of lodging any objection they may have to urge to the results of the assessment. A revised form of *patta* has been introduced containing the classification of, and the revenue assessed on, each field, as well as a clause declaring the right of the settlement-holder to apply for relinquishment of individual fields. On payment of 4 annas each settlement-holder in Kamrup and Sibsagar, when the settlement is completed, may now have a *patta* in the revised form, together with a printed copy of the village map; in other districts the *pattas* will be issued in the revised form only. A good deal of "Extension survey" was carried out by village recorders during the year of portions of the temporarily-settled area of each district which was not cadastrally surveyed by the professional party. Progress was especially noticeable in Lakhimpur, Kamrup and Sibsagar. In Lakhimpur the work is preparatory to the district settlement, and in the other two districts it is supplementary to the district resettlements.

SECTION 3.—Land Records.

[*See* Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year ending the 30th September 1907.]

EASTERN BENGAL.

General.

80. The district reports regarding the maintenance of the record show a general absence of field-to-field enquiries and great diversity of procedure in the matter of stamp duty and mutation fees. So long as the collecting staff has to carry on the work of maintenance in addition to its own duties it is hardly possible to expect a thorough field-to-field enquiry.

Maintenance of records in Government and wards' estates.

81. The number of mutations recorded reached in only five districts the standard percentage laid down by the Board of Revenue. These districts were Bakarganj, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Noakhali, where the number of mutations recorded amounted to 17, 13, 9, 9, and 8 per cent. respectively, of the number of tenancies. In two instances the percentage was 2, and in two other cases only 1 per cent. was recorded.

The report of the special officer deputed to elaborate a system for maintaining the record in the Chittagong district is under consideration. The use of the record in Eastern Bengal is slowly but perceptibly extending.

ASSAM.

General.

82. In Assam there is a regular staff for the maintenance of the record, which is duner the supervision of the Director of Land Records, aided by an Assistant who inspects Land Records. This latter officer was on tour for 303 days in the year under report. The maps and records are kept up to date by an agency of village-recorders who are known as mandals and patwaris in the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley, respectively. The average number of fields assigned to a recorder is 2,565 in the Assam Valley, and 5,724 in the Surma Valley. The areas of the recorders are grouped into "circles," each circle being in charge of a resident Sub-Deputy Collector, who is in turn assisted in his work by a few supervisor kanungos. The recorder is directly subordinate to the kanungo and Sub-Deputy Collector, and not to the mauzadar, whose business is only the collection of revenue. The number of areas or "lots" in a circle at present averages 36, while the number of lots in a kanungo's sub-circle averages 17. The circle system has not yet been fully established in all districts. There are three grades of recorders drawing Rs. 8, Rs. 10 and Rs. 12 per month, respectively. Kanungos are selected from the ranks of recorders. There are three lower schools in Assam at Gauhati, Dibrugarh and Silchar, respectively, established primarily for the instruction of village-recorders. Outside candidates are also admitted on payment of fees. During the year under report no less than 81 of the 96 successful candidates were outsiders.

Mandals and patwaris.

83. The number of mandals and patwaris employed in the Assam districts, excluding Darrang and Nowgong where the maintenance of the record was merged in the resettlement of the districts, was 823. The highest percentage of mutations recorded was in Sylhet, where it reached 22,075, or 53 per cent. of the total number of holdings. Of these all but 1,010 were effected by summary procedure.

SECTION 4.—Settlements for Special Cultivation (Waste Lands).

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Total area and revenue.

84. The area settled for special cultivation at the end of the year was 1,167,667 acres with a revenue demand of Rs. 6,78,567, against 1,163,334 acres with a revenue of Rs. 7,21,596 in the previous year. The increase of 4,333 acres in area was due to new settlements and was shared by all districts. The decrease in revenue is accounted for by the fact that during the year tea lands held under ordinary leases in four of the Assam districts were reassessed at slightly lower rates than had previously been imposed on them in view of the general reductions made, in the course of the recent settlements, in the rates imposed on similar lands held for ordinary cultivation.

The only "special cultivation" in the districts of Eastern Bengal is that of tea in the district of Jalpaiguri. During the year six tea estates with an area of 2,918 acres were resettled on the expiration of the term of the preliminary leases. The new revenue fixed for those estates is Rs. 3,820, against Rs. 2,204 paid under the former leases. The term of settlement is 30 years. Two new applications for settlement were dealt with, and three such applications were pending at the close of the year. The total area settled under these rules in this district is 236,056 acres with a land revenue demand of Rs. 2,03,595.

Applications for settlement.

85. There were no applications for settlement for special cultivation in Cachar. In Sylhet, 13 new applications were filed during the year, against 7 in the previous year, and out of a total of 20 applications for disposal, settlement was effected in 14 cases during the year. In the Assam Valley there were 59 new applications, as against 48 in the previous year, but out of a total of 101 applications for disposal only 35 were disposed of during the year. This work appears to have received insufficient attention in the districts of Sibsagar and Darrang.

Resignation and resumption of grants.

86. There was no resumption of grants in Assam, but the relinquishment of two grants came into effect in the district of Sylhet, and in Nowgong applications for the relinquishment of 5 grants, covering an area of 2,036 acres, were filed during the year.

SECTION 5.—Government Estates.

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908.]

Number of estates under direct management.

87. The number of estates under direct management was reported last year to be 1,559, but it has been ascertained that this figure included also Government estates not under direct management. As strictly defined, the number of estates under direct management during the year was 1,392, against 1,397 in the preceding year.

Collecting agency.

88. There has been no material change either in the agency employed or in the mode of management of the Government estates under direct management. In Bakarganj another collection circle, named Kalamegha, has been opened and placed under the Colonisation Officer of the Sundarbans with effect from the 1st April 1908. The Collector reports that the addition of the Colonisation Officer to the staff has had the most encouraging results, not only in the matter of colonisation proper, but also in the improvement of the management of the *khas mahals* which have been placed under his charge. He adds that the management of, and the method of collection in, the *khas mahals* leaves very much to be desired, and he has since submitted a proposal for re-organising the collecting and supervising agency.

The tahsildar of the Jamalpur subdivision of the Mymensingh district was prosecuted on a charge of bribery in connection with the settlement of an estate, and was convicted and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment.

Allotment and expenditure.

89. The total sum available during the year for the management of, and for agricultural, sanitary, and miscellaneous improvements in, Government estates was Rs. 2,73,850, excluding a sum of Rs. 30,000 set apart for the reclamation of waste lands in the Bakarganj Sundarbans. Of this sum, Rs. 2,65,191 was actually spent within the year. The cost of management (including the cost of collection) bore the proportion of 7·6 per cent. to the total revenue demand of the estates under direct management.

Revenue demand.

90. The revenue derived from the estates under direct management at the close of the year was Rs. 22,34,093. The revenue shows an increase as compared with the previous year, owing to settlement and resettlement, and also, in part, to the reclassification of estates.

General.

91. The *raiyatwari* settlement of *Char* Mir Muhammad Ali in the district of Noakhali has proved a success. Most of the reclamable lands have already been taken up and a number of families have settled permanently in the *char*.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND.

There were the usual variations in the number of schools in *khas mahals* and in the number of pupils attending them. The expenditure on such schools amounted to Rs. 9,157 in the Dacca Division and Rs. 13,191 in the Chittagong Division. There was on the whole a considerable increase in the number of children attending them. The condition of the *khas mahal* tenants during the year is reported to have compared favourably with that of the tenants of private estates.

SECTION 6.—Wards' and Attached Estates.

[*See* Report on the Administration of the Wards', Attached, and Trust Estates in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Number of states under management.

92. The total number of estates under the management of the Court of Wards during the year under report was 53, including 8 new estates taken in charge. Five estates were released in the course of the year, leaving 48 estates under the Court's management at its close.

Revenue and cesses due to Government.

93. The total amount of revenue and cesses due to Government for the year was Rs. 10,15,488, including an arrear demand of Rs. 1,24,368. Payments amounted to nearly nine lakhs, or 87·79 per cent. of the demand, as compared with 95·7 per cent. in the previous year, leaving a balance of Rs. 1,21,759. This indifferent result was due almost entirely to the hopeless position of the estate of Sir Sourindra Mohan Tagore, lying mainly in the Bakarganj district. This estate is heavily involved, and no portion of the collections of the year was available for the payment of current demands. The revenues and cesses due from the more solvent estates in the Rajshahi and Chittagong Divisions were realised practically in full.

Rents and cesses due to superior landlords.

94. The payments on account of rent and cesses due to superior landlords amounted to 65·6 per cent. on the total demand. The heavily encumbered estates in the Bakarganj district are the main contributors to the large balance of nearly two-and-a-half lakhs that remained unpaid at the close of the year. In this district alone the balance amounted to Rs. 2,10,741, of which sum Rs. 1,34,093 were due from the Haturia group of estates, whose manager is to be relieved for inefficiency.

Collection of rents and cesses.

95. The percentage of the current demand for rents and cesses due to the estates under management which was collected during the year amounted to 108·8, as against 102·9 in the previous year, showing that a fair proportion of the arrears due was realised. There has been a general improvement in the percentage of collections in all the divisions except in the Surma Valley districts, where only 83·2 per cent. on the current demand was collected, against 98·07 per cent. in the previous year.

The uncollected balance at the close of the year amounted to 111·8 per cent. on the current demand. Though this represents a great improvement on the very high percentage (178·7) of the previous year, the uncollected balance is still very heavy. The heaviest outstanding balances are shown against the estates in the Bakarganj district. It is hoped that the appointment of a Wards' Deputy Collector for the district will result in a great improvement in the management and the financial position of these estates. There was an increase in the number of civil suits filed during the year. Out of a sum of Rs. 1,05,011 decreed only 59·4 per cent. was actually realised, and there is good reason to believe that managers are too prone to rush into ill-considered litigation and to file suits against persons from whom there is no hope of realising the claim. The number of certificates filed fell by over 1,000 as compared with the previous year. Of the demand covered by the certificates issued, only 40 per cent. was realised. In the case of several estates very insufficient use appears to have been made of this means of realising arrears.

Debts.

96. A sum of Rs. 4,06,110 was paid during the year in liquidation of debts. The total amount of the indebtedness of all estates at the close of the year was nearly 50 lakhs of rupees, by far the most heavily indebted being the estate of Sir Sourindra Mohan Tagore with a total of over 22 lakhs.

Cost of management and expenditure on improvements.

97. The percentage of the cost of management on the current demand was 12·6, and showed practically no change from the previous year. It was highest in the Rajshahi Division (14·6) and lowest in the Dacca Division (9·8). Satisfactory reductions were made in the cost of management in the Kasim Bazar estate in Tippera and in the Bakarganj district.

Very little money was available for expenditure on schools, dispensaries, and other improvements in the estates of the Dacca Division, most of which are heavily encumbered, and the small estates which are in the Court's charge in the district of

Chittagong could not give much help. In the Rajshahi Division the estates under the Court's charge are better able to discharge their obligations in this respect, and a sum of Rs. 48,463 is shown as having been expended in this Division on schools, dispensaries and works of improvement.

98. During the year there was no change in the laws administered by the Court of Wards. Since the close of the year, however, the Public Demands Recovery Act, I (B.C.) of 1895, has been introduced into the district of Sylhet. Laws.

SECTION 7.—Revenue and Rent-paying Classes.

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908 and the Divisional Annual Miscellaneous Reports for 1907-1908].

99. The early portion of the year 1907-08 was marked by serious agrarian unrest in the Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions and by outbreaks of violence in the districts of Mymensingh, Tippera and Rajshahi. But the strong measures taken by Government, both against the rioters and against those who had provoked the unrest, proved sufficient to quell the disturbances within a short time. The judgments of the Courts before whom the cases of rioting were tried disclosed a deep-seated indebtedness on the part of the tenants and a strong resentment at the endeavours of a certain class of the population, among whom the low-paid agents of absentee zamindars were prominent to force on them a boycott of British goods in which they had no desire to participate and which so far aggravated the discomforts of their condition as to cause them to offer open resistance to the agitating classes. Unrest in Eastern Bengal.

100. Special enquiries into the condition of the tenantry in Mymensingh were conducted by Mr. Gourlay, and it was found that the great increase in prosperity which should have been theirs had been diverted by an extortionate system of money-lending to the middleman class. The attempts made by Government to restore to the tenantry habits of thrift and self-reliance by the establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies in the Jamalpur subdivision have proved highly successful so far, and many petitions have been received for its extension. Condition of tenants.

From the Rajshahi Division a large number of complaints were received both by the Government of India and by the Local Government of oppression on the part of the agents of absentee landlords, and it has been found necessary in some cases to institute survey and settlement proceedings in the interests of the tenantry.

The year was also remarkable for a great increase in the interest taken in public life by the agriculturist class, and tenants' associations have now been formed which voice their grievances and furnish to them opportunities for the discussion of matters of public interest. This fact was particularly noticeable in the case of the important Hindu tenant classes of the Mahishyas and Namasudras, and it is to their awakening, as well as to that of the Muhammadan community, that the increase in the number of pupils in schools is mainly due.

The tenantry are showing a high appreciation of the benefits of a general survey and record-of-rights. In consequence of the operations in Bakarganj rioting cases have decreased by 50 per cent., and a similar result may be anticipated from the operations which have been commenced in Mymensingh.

101. During the year this Act has been amended and supplemented by Act I (Eastern Bengal and Assam Council) of 1908. The operations of Survey and Settlement have done much in the areas in which they have been in progress in enabling the people to become better acquainted with the provisions of the Act, but many tenants are still afraid of an open rupture with their landlords as the result of insisting on their legal rights, when they know them, and in many districts the people have but little knowledge of their rights and privileges under the Act. The proceedings for the preparation of a record-of-rights, which provide the landlord with a copy of the record, and the tenants with *khatians* containing the details as to each man's holding, have usually secured a stricter observance of the law and a better appreciation of the rights of tenants. The progress of these operations is, however, necessarily gradual, and considerable time must lapse before they can reach several areas in which the relations between landlords and tenants are noticeably unsatisfactory. There was a considerable increase during the year in voluntary transfers under Section 12 (3) of the Act, which was probably occasioned in part by the high prices of food-grains. Only 8 per cent. of the amount deposited as landlords' fees for transfers of holdings were claimed by the landlords. The provisions of the amending Act, I of 1908, are designed to obviate the difficulties which have in the past deterred landlords from Working of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

accepting these fees, by providing that the fees shall be remitted to the landlords at the cost of the transferors, and that the acceptance of such a fee by the landlord shall not operate as an admission by him of the accuracy of the statements made in the deed of transfer. As in previous years, little use was made by private landlords of the sections providing for the registration of improvements and the issue of notices of re-entry by landlords.

CHAPTER III.—PROTECTION.

SECTION 1.—Legislating Authority.

[*See* General Administration Report for 1905-1906, Part II, pages 119-120.]

SECTION 2.—Course of Legislation.

Acts and Bills.

102. One Act was passed by the Eastern Bengal and Assam Council during the year, *viz.*, Act III of 1907,—the Eastern Bengal and Assam Court of Wards (Amendment) Act. The Bill was introduced in Council on the 18th December 1906, and was passed on the 8th April 1907. It received the assent of the Governor General on the 25th May following. The two most important provisions of the Act are (1) that all private creditors are required, on due notice being given to them, to give full information to the Court as to their claims against the proprietor or his property under the penalty of forfeiting their claims if they wilfully withhold the information; and (2) that the Court is placed, with respect to all estates of which it may assume the management, in the same position as it holds with respect to the estates of improvident proprietors. The remaining provisions are intended to ensure that notices to creditors are published in such a manner as to come to the knowledge of all who may be affected by them; and to clear up doubts which existed as to the person chargeable for expenses incurred in inquiries regarding the disqualification of proprietors, as to the extent of the responsibility of employés of the court, and as to the power of wards to create encumbrances on their estates under the management of the Court without its consent.

The Eastern Bengal and Assam Tenancy Amendment Bill was introduced in Council on the 27th November 1907, and is now Act I of 1908. The main object of the Bill was, as far as may be, to assimilate the law of landlord and tenant in the transferred districts to the law in Bengal.

Extension of Acts.

103 The following Acts were extended to various parts of the province:—

(1) Act V (B.C.) of 1880 (Vaccination Act) to the Tezpur Municipality.

(2) Part X of Act III (B. C.) of 1884 (Municipal Act) to the Jhalakati Municipality.

(3) Act II of 1891 (Calcutta Hackney Carriage Act) to the Narayanganj Municipality and the Nator Municipality.

(4) Act II (B.C.) of 1867 (Gambling Act) to the town of Rajbari in Faridpur.

(5) Section 3 of Act XIII of 1899 (Glanders and Farcy Act) to the Shillong Station, the Gauhati Municipality, the Shillong-Gauhati cart road, and the Rangpur Municipality.

(6) Act II (E. B. & A.) of 1907 (Disorderly Houses Act) to Kasiais in Chittagong, Gopalganj in Faridpur and the Alipur Duars in Jalpaiguri.

(7) Section 34 of Act V of 1861 (Police Act) to the town of Lumding in Nowgong.

(8) Part IX of Act III (B.C.) of 1884 (Municipal Act) to certain villages in the Nawabganj Municipality.

(9) Part VII of Act III (B.C.) of 1884 (Municipal Act) to the Narayanganj Municipality.

(10) Section 261 of Act III (B.C.) of 1884 (Municipal Act) to the Sylhet Municipality.

(11) Act III (B. C.) of 1903 (Motor-car and Cycles Act) to Kamrup and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

SECTION 3.—Police.

[*See* Report on the Police Administration of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907 Statistics of British India, Part VI.]

MILITARY POLICE.

Strength and distribution.

104. The most important event of the year was the enlistment of two companies of Military Police at Dacca, one being an addition to the sanctioned strength of the province, and raised in July last by the transfer of Jharua sepoys from other battalions. The second company was formed after the close of the year by the conversion of the

old company of special reserves into Military Police. The transfer of men to the new Dacca Battalion was mainly responsible for the shortage of 52 sepoys on the sanctioned strength of the other Military Police battalions. The vacancies are being filled up.

Drill and Discipline. 105. All the battalions showed a high standard of efficiency in drill, shooting and signalling. The number of marksmen has fallen off considerably, but this is due to the introduction of the revised annual course of musketry, which is harder than the old. On the other hand, the number of first and second-class shots has improved. The discipline of the battalions was good.

Enlistment. 106. The total number of men enlisted was 299, as against 255 in the previous year. Of these 190 were Gurkhas. The increase was due to the transfer of 114 men from other corps to the new Dacca Battalion.

Mortality. 107. There were 26 deaths, a decrease of seven on the previous year. Seven deaths were due to cholera, the remainder to other causes.

Military Operations. 108. There were two expeditions during the year. A force of 80 rifles and two native officers under Captain C. Bliss proceeded on a punitive expedition to Kehomi, a trans-frontier Naga village, to punish the villagers for a murderous attack by ten men of the village on Seromi traders who were British subjects. In the Lushai Hills a force of 150 rifles was taken to Lungleh in November 1907, and went *viâ* Duipang to Zongling, a village beyond the administrative frontier of the Lushai Hills, to co-operate with the Chin Hills and Arracan authorities in punishing the villagers for taking captives from a British village. A force of 50 rifles proceeded beyond Zongling to Lakhi, where they met the Chin Hills and Arracan forces and returned with them. The work in both expeditions was satisfactorily done.

Miscellaneous extra duties. 109. During the year detachments of the Military Police were sent to Silchar, Barisal, Comilla, Dacca, Mahendiganj (Mymensingh), Baksiganj and Sirajganj.

Eleven men were also sent as additional police to Mymensingh.

These special duties were performed by officers and men with tact and good temper, and materially assisted the preservation of peace in disturbed areas.

Battalion Schools. 110. The number of boys on the rolls increased from 112 to 172.

CIVIL POLICE.

Strength and distribution. 111. The statement below will show in detail the sanctioned as well as the actual strength of the force, including the Railway Police, River Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Finger Print Bureau, and the Police Training School as it stood on the 31st December 1907 :—

	Sanctioned strength.		Actual strength.		
	1906.	1907.	1906.	1907.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Deputy Inspectors-General	3	3	3	3	
Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents	69	69	44	54	
Total ...	72	72	47	57	
Inspectors	87	102	86	100	
Sub-Inspectors	814	846	744	795	
Sergeants	2	3	2	3	
Head Constables	801	1,038	683	990†	
Constables	7,544*	7,755	7,357	7,538‡	
Total ...	9,248	9,744	8,872	9,426	
Town Chaukidars	412	412	407	412	
Grand total	9,732	10,228	9,326	6 ,895	
Union Police—					
Head Constables	Included under District Police.				
Constables					

* Excluding town chaukidars shown separately.
† Including 1 Head Constable for the Hailakandi Union.
‡ Including 4 constables ditto ditto.

The number of Assistant Superintendents is still short of requirements by 13. Two officers were transferred from the Provincial Civil Service to be Assistant Superintendents of Police, and sanction was obtained to the appointment of three military officers as first-grade Assistant Superintendents.

Armed Reserve.

112. The total strength at the close of the year was 2 Inspectors, 17 Sub-Inspectors, 54 Head Constables and 660 constables. Two hundred constables were recruited during the year.

Recruitment.

113. Improvement of pay and the grant of service increments has had no marked effect in making the service more popular, and in many districts suitable recruits are hard to obtain. One thousand four hundred and twenty-two recruits were enlisted during the year—nearly double the number recruited in 1906. Of these, 782 were natives of the province, 58·7 per cent. of the local recruits being Muhammadans. The proportion of Muhammadans is still low, but is being gradually increased.

Discipline.

114. Discipline has been good throughout the year, except in Sylhet and Kamrup. There was a slight improvement in Sylhet, Kamrup, and Sibsagar. The difficulty caused by Assamese constables resigning on any restraint being put upon them is still felt. It is hoped that the new constables' training school will greatly improve discipline.

The percentage of constables departmentally punished to the total strength was 15, and the percentage of judicial punishments was 1·05.

Improvements introduced.

115. The following are the principal reforms introduced during the year 1907 in conformity with the recommendations of the Police Commission, so far as they were approved by the Government of India in the Home Department Resolution No. 245-259, dated the 21st March 1905 :—

(1) A Police training school was established in Dacca.

(2) Five Deputy Superintendents of Police were appointed to complete the cadre, and certain grade promotions were given to the existing staff.

(3) Grade promotions rendered admissible by the increase of cadre were given to Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables.

(4) Two hundred Head Constables were recruited to replace Writer Constables.

(5) Twenty-five Sub-Inspectors were appointed towards the general increase of cadre.

(6) The pay of sergeants was revised.

(7) The Provincial Criminal Investigation Department was strengthened by the appointment of additional staff.

(8) The Armed Police (formerly known as the District Police Reserve) was strengthened.

(9) Certain additions were made to the strength of the Railway Police.

(10) A fixed travelling allowance of Rs. 30, 15, and 10 a month was granted respectively to each Inspector, Sub-Inspector and Head Constable of the River Police.

(11) The substitution of constables for town chaukidars was sanctioned but not introduced.

Certain administrative reforms were also introduced.

Additional Police.

116. Additional Police were employed under section 15, Act V of 1861, in various districts of Eastern Bengal, in the majority of cases to check the disturbances arising from political agitation. One Inspector, 11 Sub-Inspectors, 28 Head Constables, and 343 constables were so employed, but the force is being gradually diminished. Cash guards and guards for the branches of the Bank of Bengal were also supplied in various places.

Special Police.

117. In the Sylhet district 54 Special Constables were appointed for six months in connection with riots over fisheries.

Railway Police.

118. The force of Railway Police was considerably increased during the year by the addition of one Inspector, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 7 Head Constables and 23 constables. In addition to these, two Sub-Inspectors, one Head Constable and fifteen constables were temporarily borrowed from the District Police to travel on the line. These measures checked the outbreak of theft from passengers in running trains.

The work of the Railway Police has not been satisfactory, but has been carried on under great disadvantages. The force is undermanned and very badly housed.

There were 139 accidents during the year, 61 of which were attended with loss of life. In two accident cases prosecutions were instituted, one ending in conviction.

PROTECTION.

River Police.

119. A Superintendent of River Police was appointed with effect from the 28th March 1907, but owing to paucity of officers the appointment remained vacant till January 1908. In October 1907, the River Police force was brought to its full sanctioned strength of 2 Inspectors, 6 Sub-Inspectors, 1 Head Constable and 20 constables. Thirteen Head Constables and 37 constables were also deputed from the District Police, and the whole force was employed in travelling on steamers and patrolling important steamer stations. Some difficulty was found in obtaining suitable men for employment as constables, owing to their getting no allowance.

A scheme is under preparation for the River Police of the province, but independent work will not be started for some months.

Training School.

120. The Police Training School established at Dacca at the beginning of 1907 has had a successful year. The staff now consists of a Principal and 8 instructors—3 for Law and 5 for Drill. The number of cadets trained was 65. Four probationary Assistant Superintendents and two probationary Deputy Superintendents were also trained.

At the beginning of the current year a school for training constables was established at Silchar, and sanction for another such school at Rampur-Boalia has also been obtained.

Conduct of the Police.

121. The work of the Police was satisfactory on the whole. A considerable number of serious charges were brought against the Police, but in most of the cases they were either found to be false or were withdrawn by the complainants before inquiry.

Union and Town Police.

122. The force for watch and ward duty in the several Municipalities of the province consisted of 2 Sergeants, 57 Head Constables, 591 constables, and 412 town chaukidars. The substitution of constables for the latter has been sanctioned, but cannot be carried out until barracks are built.

The two European Inspectors temporarily appointed to the town of Dacca materially helped the maintenance of good discipline in the force.

Rural Police.

123. Chaukidars are employed in all the districts of Eastern Bengal and in the Assam districts of Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara. The total number (including daffadars) employed, was 57,588, an increase of 17 on the previous year. Their work was unfavourably reported on, and the present *panchayati* system continues to work indifferently. In the Dacca district, where the control of presidents has been considerably curtailed, the results are somewhat better. Rather more than 6 per cents. of the total force were rewarded, and in the Rajshahi district 46·6 of the force were punished during the year.

Cost.

124. The total cost of the Department—Military and Civil Police—was Rs. 41,21,688, as against Rs. 34,71,175 in 1906.

Statistics of Crime.

125. The total number of cognisable cases dealt with was 82,923—a decrease of 737 on the previous year. Of these, 53,528 were reported to the Police and 26,319 to Magistrates.

Of the cases reported to the Police, 22·5 per cent. were not investigated under section 157, Criminal Procedure Code. Under heads housebreaking and theft the percentage of cases not investigated was 39·9 and 29·5 respectively, in both cases an increase on the previous year. In 446 cases only of the total number not investigated did Magistrates order an investigation, a fact which tends to show that the reasons for refusal of inquiry were in the main at least plausible.

As compared with the previous year, the judicial results fell off in all districts except Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Darrang. Of the cases dealt with by the police 75·4 per cent. ended in conviction, Bogra showing the highest district percentage of 86·3, and Nowgong the lowest, 57·6. Of the total number of investigated cases, 44·3 per cent. were sent up for trial—a very slight increase on the previous year.

Remands.

126. The number of remands in the year under report shows an increase on the previous year. Only 41 per cent. of cases tried were disposed of in two hearings.

There was a very slight improvement in the percentage of cases remanded more than six times, namely, from 7·6 in 1906 to 7·4. As in the previous year, Jalpaiguri and Bogra have the best records; there the percentage of cases decided in two hearings reached 60. In every other district except Dinajpur, Malda, Goalpara, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur the percentage was below 50, and in Bakarganj, Faridpur, Chittagong, and Cachar it was below 30.

False Cases.

127. One thousand six hundred and eighty-one cases were declared maliciously false by Magistrates during the year, and in 205 of these prosecutions were undertaken.

Of these 205, 81 cases ended in conviction. Dacca, Mymensingh, Bakarganj, and Sylhet show the largest number of cases declared false, and in Sylhet the largest number (29) of prosecutions were instituted. The difficulty of applying the law successfully in these prosecutions is responsible for the poor results.

In 88 cases compensation was awarded under section 250, Criminal Procedure Code.

128. During the year 5,834 persons were bound down under section 107, Criminal Procedure Code, or 1,000 more than in the previous year. Of these 5,834, no less than 5,304 belonged to the Dacca Division. There was a considerable increase in the number of rioting cases reported true during the year, due to some extent to political disturbances. Preventive measures.

One thousand and seventy-nine persons were required to give security for good behaviour under section 110, Criminal Procedure Code. Of these, 958 were sent to jail in default of finding security. The decrease in prosecutions under this section was probably due to the many other duties devolving upon the Police.

129. During the whole year, the Criminal Investigation Department has been greatly hampered by the large amount of extraneous work which has devolved upon them. Much useful work has in consequence been kept in abeyance, and the cases actually dealt with have suffered from constant changes of the officers in charge of them. Besides other cases investigated, seven important gang cases have been instituted during the year, all of which were pending at the close of the year. Criminal Investigation Department.

One thousand six hundred references were made to the Finger-print Bureau during the year, 286 coming from other provinces. There is now a total record of 37,639 finger-impression slips in the Bureau.

130. The number of unnatural deaths during the year under review was 13,757, against 14,984 in 1906. Four hundred and eighty-six men, 785 women and 36 children committed suicide; 869 men, 724 women and 6,417 children were drowned; 702 men, 749 women and 496 children died of snake-bite; 197 men, 68 women and 182 children were killed by wild animals; and 26 men, 17 women and 29 children suffered fatal injuries by accidents, such as falling from buildings or trees, etc. The number of deaths from "other causes" was 792 men, 302 women and 880 children. Three cases in Rangpur and one case each in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Dacca, Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong, and Sibsagar, which were reported to the police as unnatural deaths proved on enquiry to be murders, and two cases in Dacca and one case each in Rangpur, Chittagong, and Sylhet were proved to be cases of culpable homicide. Unnatural deaths.

SECTION 4.—Criminal Justice.

Plains Districts.

[*See* Report on the Administration of Criminal Justice in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part VI.]

131. About four acres of land in Sathmera and Rupon *jotes* were transferred from the district of Darjeeling in the Province of Bengal to the district of Jalpaiguri in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Jurisdiction.

132. Thirteen Sessions Judges and two Additional Sessions Judges were employed throughout the year. An Additional Sessions Judge worked at Faridpur for 16 days during the year. A Subordinate Judge, vested with the powers of an Assistant Sessions Judge, was employed at Dacca for 1 month and 9 days. He decided one Sessions case. Judicial staff.

The Magisterial staff of the province at the close of the year consisted of 244 Stipendiary and 352 Honorary Magistrates. These figures represent an increase of 32 and a decrease of 28, respectively, on the numbers of the previous year. Additional District Magistrates appointed under section 10 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, were employed in Bakarganj and Mymensingh during the year. A special Magistrate, appointed under section 14 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, was employed on criminal work at Hatiya in the district of Noakhali. He decided 93 cases. Of the 244 Stipendiary Magistrates, 146 exercised first, 49 second, and 49 third-class powers.

There were 57 Benches of Magistrates constituted from among 352 Honorary Magistrates. Of these, 56 were independent and 1 was restricted to the trial of cases under the Municipal Act.

PROTECTION.

Offences reported.

133. There were 132,104 criminal offences reported during the year, an increase of 4,950 on the figures of 1906, of which 108,688 were under the Penal Code, and 23,416 were under Special and Local Laws. These figures are more by 3,735 and 1,215, respectively, than those of 1906. There was an increase in the number of offences in 16 districts and a decrease in 6. The increase was most marked in Mymensingh, Dacca, Sibsagar, Chittagong and Jalpaiguri, while there was a noticeable decrease in Tippera and Rajshahi.

Cases found to be false.

134. Including cases pending inquiry at the close of 1906, the number of cases found to be false, or in which complaints were dismissed during the year, was 43,526, or 32·9 per cent. of the number reported. The percentage for 1906 was 32. Complaints were dismissed in 38,887 cases, or 2,771 more than in 1906. The number of cases declared to be false after trial or inquiry was 47 less than in 1906.

Cases found to be true.

135. Of the total number of cases under inquiry during the year, 88,178 were found to be true, and of these 61,356 were brought to trial. Inquiries were pending at the close of the year in 9,695 cases. The number of cases found to be true and of cases brought to trial shows an increase on the figures of 1906 by 3,057 and 2,850, respectively.

ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.

I.—*Magistrates' Courts.*

Cases disposed of.

136. At the opening of the year, 3,186 cases, excluding cases of lunatics, were pending before Magistrates. During the year, 61,363 cases, including references under sections 347 and 349, Criminal Procedure Code, were brought to trial, and 61,345 were disposed of, 3,161 remaining pending at its close. The number of cases brought to trial was 2,833 more than in 1906. The increase was mainly in offences against property and in offences under Special and Local Laws.

The disposals were distributed as follows :—

—	Tried regularly.	Tried summarily.
1	2	3
District Magistrates	744	193
Subordinate Stipendiary Magistrates	42,043	9,959
Honorary Magistrates	3,802	33
Benches of Magistrates	3,187	1,273
Special Magistrates	93	...

Of the 744 cases tried regularly by District Magistrates, two were decided by the Deputy Commissioners of Jalpaiguri and Cachar in the exercise of their special powers under section 34 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

In addition to the cases shown above, District and Subdivisional Magistrates decided 18 cases referred to them under sections 347 and 349 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The number of cases decided during the year exceeded by 3,484 the number decided during 1906. This increase is solely accounted for by the disposals of the Subordinate Stipendiary Magistrates, who decided 4,614 more cases than in 1906. There was, on the other hand, a falling off of 927 in the number of cases decided by Honorary Magistrates sitting singly.

Results of trials.

137. Of the total number of cases shown above, 60,578 were finally disposed of by Magistrates. Of these 47·1 per cent. were convicted and 52·9 per cent. were acquitted or discharged. In 1906, 49·3 per cent. of the persons tried were convicted.

The total number of persons awaiting trial before Magistrates at the close of 1907 was 6,119, as compared with 5,618 of 1906. The number of persons in custody at the close of the year was 296, as against 405 at the close of 1906.

The sentences passed on persons convicted were as follows :—

Imprisonment	Rigorous	11,175
	Simple	300
Fine	With imprisonment	1,494
	Without imprisonment	23,901
Whipping	Sole punishment	415
	Additional punishment	76

Punishments.

138. The number of persons who were punished with whipping as the sole punishment is considerably less than in the previous year.

A term of solitary confinement was included in 148 of the sentences of rigorous imprisonment, and in the cases of 16 youthful offenders the sentence of imprisonment was commuted to detention in a reformatory school. One thousand and eighty-eight persons were called upon to give security for good behaviour, and 983 of these were sentenced to terms of imprisonment not exceeding one year on failing to comply with the orders. One hundred and seventy-seven persons were releaedd on probation under section 562 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Against persons who had previously been so released, proceedings were subsequently taken in 64 cases, and 69 persons were convicted and punished. In addition to substantive punishments, 7,172 persons were required to execute bonds to keep the peace, of whom 1,294 were convicted of offences involving a breach of the peace. The power to direct persons who received substantive punishment to execute bonds to keep the peace was more freely exercised than in 1906. Of the sentences of imprisonment imposed, 1,920 were for terms not exceeding 15 days; 7,577 for terms not exceeding six months; 2,907 for terms not exceeding two years; and 38 for terms exceeding two years.

The fines imposed aggregated Rs. 3,26,200. During the year Rs. 2,97,822 were realised; and Rs. 54,319 paid as compensation to complainants out of the fines realised.

Miscellaneous proceedings under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

139. There were 3,514 proceedings under Chapter VIII, Criminal Procedure Code, to prevent a breach of the peace, in which 13,101 persons were involved. The number of cases and of persons involved therein was the largest in the last ten years. It is worthy of note that the districts of the Dacca Division and the Tippera district account for nearly 11,000 of the persons so proceeded against, and that it was in these five districts that political agitation and unrest were most pronounced. Of the persons concerned, 5,901 were required to execute bonds to keep the peace, in addition to the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraph as having been similarly bound down on conviction.

In 695 cases, 1,723 persons were called upon to show cause why they should not give security to be of good behaviour, and the orders were made absolute against 1,185. Of these, 1,080 failed to give the required security and were imprisoned in default, 97 after reference to the Court of Session under section 123 of the Code, and 983 under orders of Magistrates for terms not exceeding one year.

Proceedings for the abatement of nuisances under Chapter X of the Code were taken in 385 cases, and in the cases of 332 persons a reference was made to a jury under section 138 of the Code. The number of cases under Chapter XII of the Code involving questions of the possession of land decided by Magistrates during the year was 1,090, an increase of 294 on the figures for 1906.

Under Section 250 of the Code, 316 complainants were ordered to pay compensation to accused persons, the accusation brought by them having been found to be frivolous or vexatious. Proceedings for maintenance under Chapter XXXVI of the Code were taken against 418 persons, and orders were made absolute against 172.

Witnesses.

140. The number of witnesses examined in the Courts of Magistrates was 229,298, as compared with 2,28,559 in 1906. The number who attended and were discharged without examination was 92,732 or 28·8 per cent. of the whole number in attendance. In the preceding year the percentage was 29·2. The amount paid to witnesses on account of the expenses of their attendance rose from Rs. 40,562 in 1906 to Rs. 48,826 in 1907.

Of the total number in attendance, 246,046 (76·4 per cent.) were discharged on the first day; 56,407 (17·5 per cent.) on the second; 15,522 (4·9 per cent.) on the third; and 4,055 (1·2 per cent.) after the third day. The number of witnesses detained for more than three days was 827 less than the number so detained in 1906. The result shows a perceptible improvement.

II.—*Courts of Session.*

Commitments, etc.

141. The number of cases committed for trial or referred during the year was 767, or 151 less than in 1906; and the number disposed of, including pending cases of the previous year, was 778, or 135 less than in 1906. There were 103 cases pending at the close of the year.

Results of trials.

142. There were 1,855 persons, or 404 less than in 1906, under trial before Courts of Session during the year. The cases of 1,582 persons were decided and 266 remained under trial at the close of the year. Of the 1,582 persons tried, 993 or 62·7 per cent., as against 60·7 per cent. in 1906, were convicted, and 539 were acquitted or discharged, and the cases of 49 persons were referred to the High Court under Sections 307 and 374 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The case of one person was referred to the High Court under Section 341 of the Code.

Punishments.

143. The following sentences were passed by the Courts of Session during the year :—

Death		27
Transportation	For life	63
	For a term of years	13
Imprisonment	Rigorous	806
	Simple	6
Fine		25
Whipping		2

In the cases of 9 out of the 806 persons sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, the sentences included terms of solitary confinement ; and in the cases of five youthful offenders, sentences of imprisonment were commuted to detention in a reformatory school. Additional punishments were inflicted upon 21 of the persons sentenced to fine, and on both of those sentenced to whipping. Besides the above, 97 persons were sentenced to rigorous or simple imprisonment (2 for terms not exceeding one year and 95 for terms between one year and three years) on failure to furnish security for good behaviour, and 23 persons who had been convicted of an offence involving a breach of the peace were required to execute bonds with sureties to keep the peace in addition to their substantive punishment.

Fines to the amount of Rs. 4,655 were imposed by Courts of Session, as compared with Rs. 4,525 imposed in the preceding year. The total realisations of the year aggregated Rs. 2,674, as compared with Rs. 1,529 in 1906. No compensation was awarded out of the fines realised to complainants in 1907.

Jury trials.

144. The number of persons tried by jury during 1907 was 480 ; and of the persons so tried, the Sessions Judge agreed with the verdict of the jury in respect of 428 persons, and disagreed with it in respect of 52. In the case of 22 persons, the Sessions Judge disagreed with the verdict so completely as to consider it necessary for the ends of justice to make a reference to the High Court under section 307 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The result of these references, which represented 14 cases, was that the verdict of the jury was accepted in four cases, modified in nine, and in one case set aside.

Trials by Assessors.

145. The number of persons tried with the aid of Assessors during the year under review was 877, with the result that in the case of 536 persons the Sessions Judge concurred with the opinion of both the Assessors ; in the case of 205 he differed from the opinion of one ; and in the case of 136 he differed from the opinion of both. The corresponding figures for 1906 were 980, 613, 214, and 153, respectively.

Duration of cases.

146. The average duration of Sessions trials, from the date of commitment to the date of decision, was 41·3 days, as compared with 40·4 days in 1906 and 41·6 days in 1905. This increase in the average period of the duration of Sessions trials is not satisfactory, in view of the fact that considerably fewer witnesses were examined in 1907 than in 1906.

Witnesses.

147. The number of witnesses in attendance before the Courts of Session was 13,927. Of these, 7,878 were examined, and 6,049 discharged without examination. In 1906 the corresponding figures were 9,706 and 6,905, respectively.

Of the total number in attendance, 5,319 (38·2 per cent.) were discharged on the first day ; 4,004 (28·7 per cent.) on the second day ; 2,420 (17·4 per cent.) on the third day ; and 2,184 (15·7 per cent.) after the third day. The results are less satisfactory than those of the preceding year. The amount paid to witnesses on account of the expenses incurred by them in attending Sessions trials was Rs. 25,201, as compared with Rs. 25,333 in 1906.

Commitments, etc., to the High Court.

148. A case of a European British subject was transferred from the Court of Session of Dacca to the Original Jurisdiction of the High Court during the year, and the case was disposed of.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION.

I.—High Court.

149. At the beginning of 1907, thirty-four appeals were pending before the High Court from sentences or orders of Criminal Courts. During the year, 386 appeals were preferred and 401 decided, leaving 19 pending at its close. The numbers preferred, decided and pending were less than in 1906 by 50, 27 and 15, respectively.

Of the appeals against sentences preferred during the year, 382 were from Courts of Session, and 1 from the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri exercising special powers under section 34 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Three appeals were preferred by Government against orders of acquittal.

Results of appeals.

150. There were 397 appeals against sentences of Courts of Session decided during the year. The orders of the Lower Courts were upheld in 313 instances, reversed in 29, and modified in 54. One case was remanded for retrial. In the appeal from the sentence of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, which was decided during the year, the original order was upheld.

The results of the appeals decided during the year as affecting individuals were that the appeals of 442 persons were summarily dismissed under Section 421 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and that, in admitted appeals, the sentences on 155 appellants were confirmed, on 80 reduced or altered, and on 78 annulled. In the case of 1, a new trial or further inquiry was ordered. The percentage of appellants who were entirely unsuccessful was 78·9.

Three appeals by the Local Government against orders of acquittal were decided during the year, in all of which the appellant was substantially successful.

II.—Appellate Courts subordinate to the High Court.

Sessions Courts.

151. At the beginning of the year 119 appeals were pending before the Courts of Session. During the year, 2,694 appeals were preferred; of these 2,691 were decided, and 121 were pending at the close of the year. One appeal was transferred to another district for hearing. The number of appeals preferred to Sessions Judges was less by 10 than in 1906.

In the appeals decided by Sessions Judges during 1907, 4,541 persons were concerned. The appeals of 1,263 of these, or 27·8 per cent., were summarily dismissed; 1,677 appellants, whose appeals were admitted, were altogether unsuccessful; 635 obtained a reduction or alteration of sentence; 906 were acquitted; and in the case of 60 appellants a new trial or further inquiry was ordered. Taking into account admitted appeals only, the results were, on the whole, slightly more favourable to appellants than those of the previous year.

Magistrates' Courts.

152. In the Courts of Magistrates there were 102 appeals pending at the beginning of the year. During the year, 2,400 appeals were preferred; of these, 2,369 were decided, and 133 were pending at the close of the year. The number preferred was 120 more than in 1906.

The number of persons whose appeals were decided by Courts of Magistrates was 3,662. Of these, the appeals of 746 were summarily dismissed, and the sentences on 1,647 whose appeals were admitted were confirmed, making a total of 2,393 wholly unsuccessful appellants, or 65·3 per cent. Of the remainder, 438 appellants, or 11·9 per cent., obtained a modification of the sentences passed on them, and 787 or 21·4 per cent. their total annulment. In the case of 44 appellants a new trial or further inquiry was ordered. These results are more favourable to appellants than those of the previous year.

SUPERINTENDENCE, REFERENCE, AND REVISION.

I.—High Court.

References under Section 307, Code of Criminal Procedure.

153. Two references under section 307 of the Code of Criminal Procedure from verdicts of juries were pending in the High Court at the opening of the year, and 14 were made during the year. Fourteen of these references were decided during the year, and 2 remained undecided at its close. The result of the 14 cases disposed of was that the verdict of the jury was accepted in 4 cases, set aside in 9 and modified in 1.

References under Section 374.

154. Twenty-two references under section 374 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for confirmation of death sentences were made to the High Court during 1907, and 6 were pending before the Court at the opening of the year. Twenty-five were decided during the year, leaving three pending at its close. In the references decided, 34

persons were concerned. Of these the death sentence on 21 was confirmed, and in the cases of 2 the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. The remaining eleven persons were acquitted.

References under section 341.

155. The case of one person who, though not insane, could not be made to understand the proceedings of the Court, was referred for the orders of the High Court during the year. The conviction was approved and sentence passed by the High Court.

Revision.

156. During the year, 101 cases were reported for the orders of the High Court by Sessions Judges and District Magistrates under section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and 7 were pending at the opening of the year. Of these, 105 were decided and 3 remained pending. The number reported was 17 less than in 1906. In 43 cases the orders sent up for revision were set aside or the proceedings quashed, and in 22 a new trial was ordered. Sentences were reduced or altered in 9 cases, and enhanced in 8. In the remaining 23 cases the High Court declined to interfere.

Orders were passed under section 435 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in 478 cases, an increase of 28 on the figures of the previous year. Of these, 470 came before the High Court on applications made to it, and 8 were taken up on review of the periodical Sessions statements submitted by Sessions Judges.

Of the applications for the issue of rules, 306 were rejected. Of 164 rules issued, 43 were finally discharged; 61 were made absolute in their entirety; the orders complained of were modified in 39 cases and the proceedings quashed in 2, and in 19 cases a new trial was ordered.

Of the 8 cases taken up by the High Court on review of Sessions statements, in 4 the orders passed by the lower courts were not disturbed, in 3 the sentences were enhanced, and in 1 the orders were reversed.

Applications for transfer.

157. Forty-five applications under section 526 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for the transfer of cases from one Court or district to another, were made in 1907. Of these, 44 were dealt with during the year, and one remained pending at its close. Of the 44 dealt with, 15 were summarily rejected, and in 2 cases transfer was granted without issue of a rule. In 27 cases rules were issued, with the result that transfers were granted in 13 and refused in 14 cases.

II.—Courts Subordinate to the High Court.

Sessions Courts.

158. Including accused persons who themselves applied for revision of the orders passed on them in the Courts of Magistrates, and accused persons against whom such applications were made by complainants, the cases of 5,187 persons were decided on revision by Courts of Session during the year. The number was more than in 1906 by 312. The applications of 1,482 persons were rejected, and as regards 2,040 the orders of the lower court were confirmed. Orders passed in the cases of 28 persons were reversed; in 2 instances proceedings were quashed; and the order of the lower court was modified in the case of 3 persons. In the case of 1,464 persons new trials or further inquiries were directed, and the cases of 168 persons were referred to the High Court.

Magistrates' Courts.

159. The cases of 2,263 accused persons who applied for revision, or against whom applications were made by complainants, came before District Magistrates for revision. The number was larger by 518 than in 1906. The applications of 898 persons were rejected, and in the cases of 662, the original sentence or order was upheld. Sentences or orders affecting 4 persons were modified, and those affecting 91 were reversed. In the cases of 3 persons proceedings were quashed, and in those of 584 persons new trials or further inquiries were directed. The cases of 21 persons were referred to the High Court.

III.—General.

References to Government under Section 401, Criminal Procedure Code.

160. During the year under report 9 cases came before Government under the provisions of section 401, Criminal Procedure Code, for the exercise of the power of suspension of sentence or the prerogative of mercy. In four cases sentences were suspended for various periods in the interest of criminal investigation; in four cases sentences of transportation for life were commuted, and in one, the power was not exercised.

Trials of European British subjects.

161. The cases of 12 European British subjects were decided during the year, against 16 in the previous year. Of these, 11 were dealt with by Magistrates, and 1 by the High Court. Of the accused persons, none of whom claimed to be tried by a mixed jury, 6 were convicted and 6 acquitted. The convictions were in 4 cases

for offences under Special and Local Laws, and in 2 cases for offences affecting the human body. The person whose case came before the High Court in its Original Jurisdiction was charged with cheating, and was acquitted. The largest number of European British subjects were tried in Darrang and Sibsagar (3 each), and Chittagong and Sylhet (2 each).

Receipts and charges.

162. The total charges for the year amounted to Rs. 14,04,641. The receipts amounted to Rs. 7,74,461. The receipts and the charges exceed those of 1906 by over fifty-six thousand, and seventy-four thousand rupees, respectively.

Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts.

Criminal Justice in Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts.

163. There was a substantial decrease in the number of cases brought to trial in the Criminal Courts of the Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts during the year as compared with the previous year. Nine hundred and forty-one cases were brought to trial, of which 888 were disposed of. The number of persons implicated in the cases decided was 1,734, of whom 59 per cent. were convicted. There was a considerable increase in the number of appeals preferred to Deputy Commissioners, the number being 77 as against 42 in the previous year. In the cases of 62 persons the orders of the lower courts were upheld by Deputy Commissioners, and the appeals of 27 appellants were rejected. The lower courts' orders were reversed in the cases of 10 appellants, and modified in the cases of 15. During the year six appeals concerning 7 persons were preferred to Government against the orders of Deputy Commissioners, and of these the appeals of 5 persons were rejected.

SECTION 5.—Jails.

[*See* Report on the Jail Administration of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part VI.]

Number of Jails.

164. The number of permanent and subsidiary jails open at the close of the year was 21 and 38, respectively. Sanction was obtained during the year for the conversion of the sub-jails at Dhubri, Aijal and Kohima into district jails.

Population.

165. There were 8,106 prisoners in jails at the beginning of the year, and 7,937 at the close of the year. The total number admitted during the year was 36,832. The increase of 372·13 in the daily average population may be attributed to longer average of length of sentences, for there was a general decrease in crimes such as theft, assault, murder, and bad livelihood. Muhammadans formed 66·19 per cent. of the total number of convicts admitted, and Hindus 29·97 per cent. Sixty-three juveniles were imprisoned during the year, and 334 females. Thirty persons were sentenced to death during the year.

Reconvictions.

166. The number of reconvicted prisoners was 1,176, against 1,415 in 1906, and the ratio per cent. to the total number admitted was 8·42, against 9·45 in the previous year.

Accommodation.

167. There was overcrowding in most of the jails during the year, particularly in the case of under-trial prisoners. The Central Jail at Dacca in particular was taxed beyond its capacity throughout the year; nor is this state of affairs likely to be improved for some considerable time, seeing that its proportion of long-term prisoners must continue to augment. Already in the affiliated jails long-term prisoners are accumulating, for whom space at the Dacca Jail can be available only at long intervals.

Under-trial prisoners.

168. Nine hundred and one under-trial prisoners were under confinement at the beginning of the year, and 787 at its close. The daily average number was 888·18 males and 21·68 females. Eight under-trial prisoners escaped from detention. The average period of detention in Magistrates' cases was 15·65 days.

Civil prisoners.

169. The number of Civil prisoners received during the year was 197, or 55 less than in 1906. The daily average number confined was 15·30.

State prisoners.

170. Two State prisoners were received during the year.

Discipline.

171. The total number of offences was 7,247 showing a decrease of nearly 1,000 on the previous year. The number of punishments inflicted amounted to 7,305, an increase on the number of offences committed, some punishments being of a combined nature. In 52 cases only was corporal punishment inflicted, and six jails show no cases of corporal punishment during the year. As before, the number of B-class prisoners punished was larger than that of A-class.

Escapes.

172. There were 25 escapes, or five less than in 1906. Of these, 23 were from Assam jails, where palisaded enclosures and dual guarding by warders and police facilitate escapes. The type of warder in Assam is also very unreliable, and it has so far

far been very difficult to induce men of the type serving in Eastern Bengal jails to take service in Assam. Twenty prisoners were recaptured during the year and six who had escaped in previous years.

Health.

173. The daily average number of prisoners was the highest for the past ten years, yet the number of admissions to hospital, 6,772, was lower than in any of the ten years except 1904 and 1906. The cases seem, however, to have been of a serious nature, for though the ratio per mille, 35·35 of the daily average of sick to the total, was lower than in any of the previous ten years except 1904, the ratio per mille of deaths, *viz.*, 28·40, has only been exceeded four times during the last 10 years. The health of the Faridpur Jail was the poorest since 1900, influenza being present for several months, besides more serious diseases. The death-rate in the jail at Barisal—usually a very unhealthy jail—was the lowest for 26 years. Besides Faridpur, the jails at Chittagong, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Bogra, Silchar, Shillong and Gauhati showed death rates of over 40 per mille.

Employment of prisoners.

174. The average daily number of convicts available for work was 6,320·81, and the average number employed on unremunerative labour was 235·79. The number employed on manufactures was 3,017·54.

Profits of Manufactures.

175. The total drawings from the treasury amounted to Rs. 3,39,241 and the total remittances were Rs. 3,68,104, showing a cash profit of Rs. 28,863, as compared with Rs. 77,354 in the preceding year.

Expenditure.

176. The total expenditure, including the cost of general supervision, was Rs. 9,01,348, against Rs. 7,36,497 in the previous year. The gross average cost per head was Rs. 111-4-8 compared with Rs. 95-5-1 in 1906. The high price of food-grains alone accounts for an increase of nearly Rs. 5 per head. None of the jails or subsidiary jails show any surplus.

SECTION 6.—Civil Justice.

Plains Districts.

[*See* Report on the Administration of Civil Justice in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part VI.]

Jurisdiction.

177. About four acres of land in Sathmera and Rupon *jotes*, forming part of the Darjeeling district in the Judgeship of Purnea in Bengal, were transferred from that district to Jalpaiguri, in the Judgeship of Dinajpur, in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Judicial Staff.

178. The permanent Civil Judicial Staff employed in the Province during the year under report consisted of 13 District and Sessions Judges; 2 Additional District and Sessions Judges; 1 Provincial Small Cause Court Judge, who exercised also the powers of a Subordinate Judge; 21 Subordinate Judges; and 141 Munsifs. In addition, 7 Executive Officers exercised the powers of a Subordinate Judge, and 20 the powers of a Munsif. The Subordinate Judges and Munsifs employed in the Assam Valley and Cachar were members of the Executive Service vested with judicial powers under Sections 25 and 36 of the Bengal, North-Western Provinces and Assam Civil Courts Act. One of the Executive Officers at Alipur in the district of Dinajpur was also vested with the powers of a Munsif under that Act.

In addition to the permanent staff, a temporary Additional Subordinate Judge was employed at Sylhet from the 11th November till the end of the year. A temporary Additional Munsif was employed in Dacca (Dacca-Narayanganj) throughout the year, and another was employed at Netrokona (Mymensingh) from the 11th November till the end of the year.

Original Jurisdiction.

Criminal suits instituted.

179. The number of original suits instituted in the province in 1907 was 362,476 This figure shows a decrease of 743 on that of the previous year. Of these, 183,812 were suits for money or moveables, 137,327 were rent suits, and 41,337 title and other suits. In rent suits there was a decrease of 8,581, or 6·2 per cent., while title and other suits increased by 3,142, or 7·6 per cent., and suits for money or moveables by 4,696, or 2 5 per cent.

The value of suits instituted in 1907 amounted to Rs. 3,45,77,421.

Local distribution.

180. The decrease in the number of suits instituted was spread over Rangpur, Tippera, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Noakhali and the Assam Valley, while there was an increase in the remaining eight districts.

Mymensingh with 44,901 suits again occupies the first place in respect of the number of institutions. The other districts with over 40,000 are Dacca (44,014) and Tippera (40,876).

Number of suits disposed of.

181. Adding to the number of suits instituted during the year those which were pending at its commencement, and those which during the year were revived or received on remand or review, the total number of suits for disposal was 426,688. This number was the highest in the decade, and represents an increase of 61,858 over the number for disposal in 1898. Of these, 356,396 were disposed of, this number being less by 8,867 than the total disposed of in the previous year. The decrease occurred in both contested and uncontested suits, the former falling from 72,201 to 69,421, and the latter from 293,062 to 286,975. In Eastern Bengal the number of suits disposed of was less by 9,728 than in the previous year. In Assam there was an increase of 861.

There was a perceptible increase of disposals in the Superior Courts (910), but a considerable decrease occurred in the Munsifs' Courts (9,777).

Results of disposals.

182. In the suits disposed of during the year, plaintiffs were unsuccessful in 80,886 cases or 22·7 per cent., of which 59,113 were dismissed for default; in 34,302 cases or 9·6 per cent., a compromise was effected and plaintiffs were successful in 241,208 cases, or 67·7 per cent.

Of the 69,421 contested suits decided 57,934, or 83·4 per cent., resulted in favour of plaintiffs, and 11,487, or 16·6 per cent., in favour of defendants.

Applications for retrial.

183. The proportion of applications for re-trial to the number of cases which were dismissed for default, or in which decrees were made *ex parte*, was 4·8 per cent. the numbers being 11,356 and 236,283, respectively. The applications were successful in 5,253 cases, or 46·2 per cent.

Suits decided by Munsifs.

184. The number of suits disposed of by Munsifs shows a decrease of 9,777 on the figures for 1906. The average number of suits disposed of by each Munsif employed throughout the year was 2,106, against 2,179 in 1906. Over one-third of the total number disposed of by Munsifs were under the Small Cause Court procedure.

Suits disposed of by Subordinate Judges.

185. The number of original suits disposed of by Subordinate Judges in 1907 was 6,724, an increase of 690 over the figures of the previous year. The number of suits decided under the ordinary procedure was 1,518, and under the Small Cause Court procedure 5,206; of these, 519, or 34·1 per cent., and 979, or 18·8 per cent., respectively, were contested.

Disposals by Small Cause Courts.

186. The Provincial Small Cause Courts disposed of 5,997 original suits, of which 998 were contested.

Pending suits.

187. The number of suits pending at the close of the year rose from 58,360 to 70,416. The increase was due to the large falling off in disposals, which were considerably below the number instituted during the year.

Execution Proceedings.

188. There were 58,466 applications for execution of decrees pending from the previous year, and 271,815 such applications were made during the year. Full satisfaction was obtained in 70,020 and partial satisfaction in 57,113 cases. In 142,816 cases the proceedings were returned as infructuous, and 55,385 remained pending at the close of the year. The total amount realised in Courts other than Small Cause Courts was Rs. 82,70,827.

The coercive measures employed were imprisonment of judgment-debtors in 155 cases, arrest followed by release in 836 cases, sale of movable and immovable property in 6,542 and 27,191 cases, respectively, and attachment of property followed by its release in 24,327 cases. Possession of immovable property was given in 13,641 cases.

Miscellaneous cases.

189. Of cases of a judicial nature other than suits and execution proceedings, 35,120 were instituted during the year, 34,233 were disposed of and 8,417 were left pending. Of the cases disposed of, 13,912 were withdrawn, compromised, or confessed, 11,256 were decided *ex parte*, and 9,065 were contested. Of the total number of applications disposed of after contest 50·6 per cent. were granted. Of the pending cases 16 had been pending more than a year.

The number of miscellaneous cases of a non-judicial nature instituted and disposed of during the year was 6,114 and 6,354, respectively.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION.

I.—Appeals in the High Court.

Appeals from Subordinate Courts.

190. The number of first and second appeals from the decrees and orders of the superior civil courts in Eastern Bengal and Assam, which came before the High Court and which were decided during the past year was as follows :—

	Pending at the close of 1906.	Preferred.	Decided.	Pending at the end of 1907.
First Appeals.				
From decrees	229	125	96	258
From orders	139	60	56	143
Second Appeals.				
From decrees	1,496	1,011	814	1,693
From orders	44	72	50	66
Total ...	1,908	1,268	1,016	2,160

Of the 1,136 appeals from decrees instituted during the year, 449 or 39·5 per cent. were valued at less than Rs. 50.

Results of appeals.

191. Of the 96 appeals from original decrees decided during the year 19 were uncontested, being dismissed for default, withdrawn, or compromised. Of those decided after contest, 53 decrees of the lower courts were confirmed, 9 reversed, 10 modified, and 5 remanded.

Of the 272 appeals from appellate decrees of District Judges, 97 were summarily rejected, 6 were compromised, 3 withdrawn and 10 dismissed for default, while, of the remainder, 87 decrees of the lower courts were confirmed, 28 reversed, 4 modified, and 37 remanded to the lower courts.

Of the 542 appeals from appellate decrees of Subordinate Judges, 138 were summarily rejected, 1 was compromised, 11 withdrawn and 14 dismissed for default, while, of the remainder, 264 decrees of the lower courts were confirmed, 26 reversed, 12 varied and 76 remanded.

Of the 106 appeals from orders decided during the previous year, 34 were uncontested, and 72 were decided after trial. Of the latter, 58 orders of the lower courts were confirmed, 6 reversed, 4 varied, and 4 remanded.

Taking all classes of appeals together, appellants were entirely unsuccessful in 780 cases, or 76·7 per cent.

II.—Appellate Courts subordinate to the High Court.

Appeals instituted.

192. There were 10,105 appeals instituted in 1907, of which 4,473 were in title suits, 3,916 in rent suits, and 1,716 in suits for money or movables. The number was 76 less than in 1906, and the decrease occurred in title and rent suits. There was an increase of 74 in suits for money or movables.

The number of appeals valued at sums below Rs. 10 and between Rs. 10 and Rs. 50 was 1,183 and 3,826, respectively. The total value of appeals instituted in 1907 was Rs. 13,48,484.

The number of cases decided by Subordinate Courts during the year, in which an appeal lay, was 44,471, and the proportion of appeals instituted to appealable decisions, excluding appeals from decisions of Revenue Officers, was 22·7 per cent.

Appeals disposed of.

193. The number of appeals disposed of was 10,046, a decrease of 38 on the figures of the previous year. The number of appeals disposed of by District and Additional Judges was 3,254, and by Subordinate Judges 6,792, the former showing an increase of 294, and the latter a decrease of 332, as compared with the figures of the previous year.

The decrease in disposals was spread over four districts, the largest being in Chittagong (838) and Faridpur (342). The decrease in the case of Chittagong was due to the deputation of one of the Subordinate Judges of that district to Dacca for five

months during the year, while in Faridpur it is explained by the heavy criminal work which prevented the District Judge from devoting much time to civil work and by the fact that the Subordinate Judges disposed of a larger number of original suits than in the previous year, one of which occupied 102 days in trial.

Appeals pending.

194. There were 5,875 appeals pending at the close of the year, the number being 326 more than at the end of 1906. Of these, 76 were pending for more than one year, as compared with 77 in 1906.

Results of appeals.

195. The result on the decisions of the lower courts of the appeals decided during the year was as follows :—In 5,627 cases, or 56 per cent. of the whole, the judgment of the lower courts was affirmed, in 1,211 cases, or 12 per cent., it was modified, and in 1,557, or 15·4 per cent., it was reversed. The results are, on the whole, more favourable to the lower courts than those of the preceding year. Five hundred and ten appeals were remanded, and 1,141 were either not prosecuted or dismissed for default.

Miscellaneous appeals.

196. There were 1,454 miscellaneous appeals instituted during the year, and 1,417 were disposed of, 360 remaining pending at the close of the year.

Receipts and charges.

197. The receipts of the Civil Courts in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year under review amounted to Rs. 56,95,800, an increase of Rs. 1,38,197 on those of the previous year, and the charges to Rs. 21,81,744, a decrease of Rs. 3,899 on those of 1906. Including the amount of Rs. 72,850, realised on account of duty on probates, etc., there was a profit to Government from civil litigation of Rs. 35,14,056, or more by Rs. 1,42,096 than the profit of 1906; exclusive of the item referred to, the surplus amounted to Rs. 34,41,206. Out of the total increase, Rs. 1,34,000 odd were due to process and other fees.

Hill Districts and Frontier Tracts.

193. The number of civil suits instituted in the courts of the Hill Districts and frontier tracts was 1589, and the value of the suits was Rs. 1,37,724, an increase of nearly Rs. 30,000 on the previous year. Of the 1,813 cases for disposal during the year, 1,567 cases were finally disposed of. Seventy-two appeals were preferred to District Officers against the orders of lower courts, and all but 10 of these were disposed of, decrees being confirmed in 33 cases, reversed in 14 cases, modified in 3 cases, and remanded to the lower court in 12 cases. Twenty-three appeals were preferred to Government, and 19 disposed of. In 10 of these cases the decision of the lower court was upheld, in 4 reversed and 5 cases were remanded. During the year, 1,794 applications were made for execution of decrees, of which 1,040 were decided.

SECTION 7.—Registration.

[*See* Report on the Administration of the Registration Department in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the years 1905—1907 ; Statistics of British India, Part IX.]

Administration.

199. With effect from the 1st April 1907, the Registration Department in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar was re-organised so as to bring it into line with the rest of the province by fixing four grades of Sub-Registrars and Special Sub-Registrars, making the clerical staff of registration offices Government servants, and providing at Government cost the expenditure on office accommodation, stationery, forms and contingencies.

Registration Offices.

200. Five new offices were opened during the year under report : at Dacca sadr, Rupganj and Manohardi (Dacca) ; Mymensingh sadr ; and Jowai (Khasi and Jaintia Hills). The total number of offices open at the close of the year was 226.

Documents registered.

201. The total number of deeds registered was 862,101, as compared with 801,099 in 1906—an increase of 7·6 per cent. The increase is to be attributed to the normal increase in the population, the extension of facilities for registration and appreciation of its benefits, and growing improvement in the disposal of the work of registration offices. The reason commonly given by Sub-Registrars, *viz.*, the rise in the price of food-grains and the poverty of the people, would appear to be misleading. Of the total number of deeds registered, 769,359 relate to immovable and 91,594 to movable property, and 1,135 were wills. The number of mortgages showed an increase of nearly 35,000 on the figures of the previous year.

Working of the Muhammadan Marriage Registration Act.

202. Acts XII of 1880 and I (B.C.) of 1876 are now in force in the transferred districts, the Surma Valley and the Assam Valley districts. In the year under report 179 Muhammadan Marriage Registration offices were working, or fifteen more than in the

previous year. The total number of ceremonies registered was 48,067, an increase of over 9,000 on the previous year. The total receipts on account of gratuities and fees received by Muhammadan Marriage Registrars amounted to Rs. 80,510, as against Rs. 65,780 in 1906.

A permanent committee, consisting of some of the leading Muhammadan gentlemen of the province, was constituted during the year for the purpose of supervising Muhammadan Marriage Registrars and Kazis. The greatest obstacle to the spread of marriage registration is the fact that many of the existing Registrars have not the education and social position necessary to command the respect of their co-religionists. In nine offices no ceremonies were registered.

Registration under Act III of 1872.

203. Six marriages were registered under Act III of 1872 during the year. The ages of the bridegrooms ranged from 24 to 35 years, and those of the brides from 15 to 24 years. One widow aged 21 years was re-married.

Receipts and expenditure.

204. The total receipts of the Department rose from Rs. 8,04,870 in 1906 to Rs. 8,96,062 in 1907, owing to the increase in operations of all kinds, and the total expenditure in 1907 was Rs. 5,73,449 as against Rs. 4,40,976 in 1906. The surplus at the credit of the Department at the end of 1907 was Rs. 10,40,347.

Working of the Indian Companies Act (VI of 1882).

205. Twelve new companies were registered during the year, and three ceased to work. One hundred and one companies, with a nominal capital of Rs. 82,63,400 and a paid-up capital of Rs. 47,75,218, were in existence at the close of the year.

One company limited by guarantee was also working, and a company with a nominal capital of Rs. 1,00,000 and a paid-up capital of Rs. 7,490, registered in Bengal on 2nd May 1906, was transferred to the Registrar of this province during the year. The total amount of fees realised was Rs. 2,010-12-0, as against Rs. 1,475 received last year.

SECTION 8.—Municipal Administration.

[*See* Resolution on the Annual Reports on the working of Municipalities in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907-1908, Statistics of British India, Part VIII.]

Number of municipalities.

206. No addition was made during the year to the fifty municipal institutions of the province.

Population.

207. The municipal population increased from 626,625 to 627,295. The increase of 670 shown against Dhubri is due apparently to the inclusion of new areas in the preceding year. Small additions were made during the year to the areas of the Mymensingh and Tezpur Municipalities, but no change has been recorded in the population.

Collections.

208. The percentage of total collections on the current demand rose from 95·1 to 97·8. The improvement is satisfactory, but outstandings amounted at the close of the year to 5·2 per cent. of the total demand. Collections in Mymensingh (89·1), Sirajganj (84·9), Dibrugarh (80·8), and Nawabganj (73·9) were very poor. The percentage of remissions on current demand rose from 1·9 to 2·6, the highest percentage (34·5) occurring in Nawabganj, owing apparently to the theft of account and rate-bill books. Large remissions were made in Dibrugarh, Sirajganj, Brahmanbaria, and Barisal.

By-laws.

209. General by-laws were sanctioned for the Jhalakati and Muktagacha Municipalities. Rules framed by the Municipal Commissioners of Jalpaiguri to regulate the construction of houses were approved by Government. In Dhubri a new by-law was sanctioned to prevent the landing of fish at unauthorised places.

Extension of Acts.

210. The following extensions of Act III (B.C.) of 1884 were sanctioned during the year:—Part III was extended to Narayanganj, Part IX to certain villages within the Nawabganj Municipality, and Part X to Jhalakati; the provisions of section 261 of the Act were extended to the town of Sylhet, to enable the Commissioners to regulate hotels. The Calcutta Hackney Carriage Act, II of 1891, was extended to Narayanganj and Natór, and the Bengal Vaccination Act, V of 1880, to Tezpur. The provisions of Act VIII of 1899 (Glanders and Farcy Act) were applied to Gauhati.

Elections.

211. General elections were held in two municipalities—Dhubri and Chandpur. In Chandpur there was a contest in only two of the six wards. The jute merchants of Chandpur subsequently complained that their interests were not sufficiently represented, but they apparently showed very little interest in the elections, and most of

the seats were carried by legal practitioners. By-elections were held in several towns, but in only one case (Barisal) was the seat contested. Muhammadans are still insufficiently represented in most towns of Eastern Bengal. Unlike the rural areas, where Muhammadans predominate, the proportion of Hindus to Muhammadans in towns is 55 to 45, but they hold 13 to every 7 seats occupied by Muhammadans, although in the case of appointed Commissioners preference is given to Muhammadans when their qualifications justify the choice. It is no doubt the case that in many towns a large proportion of Muhammadans are too poor to be entitled to a vote.

Meetings.

212. The total number of meetings held was 729, of which 60 were adjourned. Fifteen municipal institutions, chiefly in Assam, failed to hold 12 meetings (the prescribed minimum). Conspicuous among these was Shillong, where only five meetings were held. The population of Shillong is increasing rapidly, and the sanitary arrangements leave much to be desired. It is desirable that the members of the Station Committee should realise that with the growing importance of the summer headquarters of Government increased responsibilities are thrown upon them. The average attendance of Commissioners at meetings was 58·64 per cent., and varied from 69·48 in the Surma Valley Division to 46·0 in the Rajshahi Division. The attendance was specially bad at Bogra and at Jalpaiguri, and the matter should receive the attention of the Commissioner.

Number of rate-payers.

213. The total number of ratepayers increased from 105,866 to 106,617, the percentage of ratepayers to the municipal population being 16·9. There were small reductions in the Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions and increases in the others, the largest occurring in the Assam Valley Division.

Methods of taxation.

214. The rate on holdings was in force in 14 municipalities and in certain wards of Madaripur; the alternative tax on persons was levied in the remaining 35 towns. It is satisfactory that the Commissioners of the Sirajganj, Rangpur and Rampur-Boalia Municipalities have decided to introduce the system of taxation on holdings. The proposal to substitute the tax on holdings for the tax on persons hitherto levied in the town of Sylhet was dropped after full enquiry. The rate on holdings was levied in Dacca at the maximum rates (10 per cent.), and in Madaripur, Chittagong, Noakhali, Silchar, Shillong, and Gauhati (7½ per cent.). A water-rate was levied in Mymensingh Shillong, and Gauhati. In Narayanganj a water-rate has been introduced since the close of the year, and the Municipal Commissioners of Dacca have resolved to impose a water-rate when the new scheme for improving the water-supply is completed. Latrine fees are levied in 35 towns.

Incidence of taxation.

215. The average incidence of taxation per head of population was Re. 1-7-5, or an increase of 1 anna 6 pies per head compared with the preceding year. In Eastern Bengal towns, which are administered under the Bengal Act, III of 1884, the average incidence rose from Re. 1-6 to Re. 1-7-3. In the four towns of Assam under the same Act the average was Re. 1-13-11, an increase of 2 annas per head. The incidence varied between Rs. 4-2-6 at Shillong to Re. 0-5-4 at Bajitpur. Although taxation is uneven, and in many cases inadequate, the year has been one of marked progress.

Revision of assessment.

216. Assessments were revised generally or partially in 33 municipalities. In 7 towns a general revision was made, but was not brought into effect during the year. The revision provided for a net increase of income of Rs. 27,213, but the actual receipts were Rs. 58,988 in excess of the receipts of the year preceding. The assessed increase for each division was—Dacca Rs. 12,829, Chittagong Rs. 1,063, Rajshahi Rs. 1,958, Surma Valley and Hill Districts Rs. 4,384, and Assam Valley Districts Rs. 6,979. Mymensingh Municipality headed the list with an increase of Rs. 5,036, of which Rs. 1,816 was under house-tax and the balance under "latrine" and "water-rates." Next in order were Shillong Rs. 4,338, Gauhati Rs. 4,151, Barisal Rs. 2,870, Pabna Rs. 2,066, and Dacca Rs. 1,125.

New imposts.

217. In Narayanganj a tax on animals and vehicles was levied for the first time.

Income from various sources.

218. The total income of the municipalities, excluding opening balances, was Rs. 17,43,673, and exceeded the income of 1906-1907 by Rs. 3,21,875. The main items of increase were grants from Government (Rs. 1,79,412), Municipal income proper (Rs. 95,173), and loans from Government (Rs. 33,000). The total grants from Government aggregated Rs. 2,76,060, or nearly 16 per cent. of the year's income. Liberal subventions were made to Dacca, *viz.*, Rs. 1,24,000 for the new conservancy scheme, Rs. 20,000 for burial-grounds, Rs. 20,000 for the up-keep of roads, and Rs. 10,000 for a new municipal market. The Narayanganj Municipality received a grant of Rs. 5,373 for the erection of a new High School building, and many other towns received small grants. Only two contributions from private sources are recorded

in the Divisional reports; the Barisal Municipality received Rs. 2,500 from the estate of the late Babu Kali Kristo Tagore, as a contribution towards the new dispensary building and the proposed waterworks, and a number of merchants in Narayanganj contributed Rs. 800 for the construction of a public ghât.

Under the head "Extraordinary and Debt" there was an increase of Rs. 31,393, due to the larger loans granted by Government. Loans from Government aggregated to Rs. 1,12,000, against Rs. 79,000 in 1906-1907. The following loans were granted during the year :—Narayanganj Rs. 90,000, Faridpur Rs. 3,000, Jalpaiguri Rs. 2,000, Sherpur (Bogra) Rs. 2,000, Sirajganj Rs. 5,000 and Dibrugarh Rs. 10,000. Excluding receipts under "Extraordinary and Debt", "Grants from Provincial and Local Revenues," and "Private Contributions," the total revenue of the year showed an increase of Rs. 96,780, or 9 per cent., against a decrease of Rs. 12,074 in the preceding year. The increase was common to all divisions. In the Dacca Division it amounted to Rs. 42,843, in Chittagong to Rs. 18,934, in Rajshahi to Rs. 14,350, in the Surma Valley and Hill districts to Rs. 10,718, and in the Assam Valley districts to Rs. 9,935.

Turning to the several sources of income, receipts from municipal rates and taxes showed the large increase of Rs. 58,988. All divisions contributed to the increase. In the Dacca Division there was an increase of Rs. 16,162, chiefly under the heads "Tax on persons" (Rs. 4,324), "Tax on houses and lands" (Rs. 3,986), "Conservancy" (Rs. 3,971), and "Tolls on roads and ferries" (Rs. 2,660). The increase under "Tax on persons" occurred in Barisal, as a result of the revision of assessments. In the Chittagong Division, where there are only six municipalities, there was an increase of Rs. 18,978, and in the Surma Valley and Hill districts, with three towns, and two unions, the receipts increased by Rs. 12,452. These substantial additions to income were due partly to a revision of assessments and partly to more efficient administration. The increase in the Rajshahi Division, which includes twelve towns, was only Rs. 6,445, and in the Assam Valley Division Rs. 4,951. Including all divisions, the receipts from "Tax on houses and lands" increased by Rs. 21,422, towards which Chittagong contributed Rs. 8,014, Shillong Rs. 3,792, Dacca Rs. 2,911, Gauhati Rs. 1,213 and Tezpur Rs. 1,085. Under "Tax on persons" there was an increase of Rs. 10,803, of which Brahmanbaria contributed Rs. 3,095. The income from water-rates increased by Rs. 5,840, of which Gauhati contributed Rs. 3,565, and Shillong Rs. 1,735. Conservancy receipts rose by Rs. 16,511, the largest increases occurring in Chittagong, Silchar, Dacca, Shillong and Sylhet. Revenue from municipal property showed an increase of Rs. 6,856, which was shared by all divisions, except the Surma Valley and Hill districts.

Expenditure.

219. The aggregate expenditure amounted to Rs. 16,64,186, or Rs. 2,82,366 in excess of the expenditure of the previous year. The ordinary expenditure (excluding repayment of loans, advances, deposits, and the like) rose from Rs. 12,12,408 to Rs. 14,54,962. This increase was shared by all divisions, except the Surma Valley and Hill districts, in which there was a small decrease. The principal heads under which increases occurred were "Water-supply" (Rs. 1,17,252), "Conservancy" (Rs. 87,750), "Hospitals and Dispensaries" (Rs. 7,700), "Office and Collection Establishment" (Rs. 6,447), and "Drainage" (Rs. 5,897). On the other hand, expenditure on "Roads" fell off by Rs. 7,139: in the Dacca Division alone the expenditure showed a decrease of nearly Rs. 17,000. Under "Other Sanitary requirements" there was a decrease of Rs. 8,348, but this was nominal and due to the inclusion in the figures for 1906-1907 of the cost of jungle-clearing in Chittagong. Under "Extraordinary and Debt" there was an increase of Rs. 39,812. Under the orders of the Government of India municipal institutions were relieved, with effect from the 1st April 1908, of all police charges which from that date are met from Provincial revenues. An assignment of Rs. 3,000 has been received from Imperial revenues for the purpose.

Water-supply (Rs. 2,02,089.)

220. The expenditure on water-supply showed an increase of Rs. 1,17,252 due chiefly to an expenditure of Rs. 1,06,010 by the Narayanganj Municipality on the town waterworks, which were completed at a cost of Rs. 2,00,831. This is the first of the many large sanitary schemes undertaken since the transfer of the Eastern Bengal districts which has been brought to completion. The works are designed to give a daily supply of 250,000 gallons. Sylhet expended Rs. 4,615 on capital outlay, and Comilla Rs. 2,276, and smaller sums were spent by Gauhati, Shillong, and Rampur-Boalia. Maintenance charges (Rs. 79,826) showed an increase of Rs. 14,310, of which Rs. 6,000 occurred in Dacca, and Rs. 3,800 in Gauhati. In Silchar, Goalpara and Pabna comparatively large increases occurred on maintenance, but the cause has not been stated. In the report for 1906-1907 reference was made to a scheme for remodelling the waterworks at Dacca, with a view to improving the supply to the old town,

and to provide for the new civil station. The scheme originally prepared by Messrs. Simpson & Co. has been thoroughly examined by the Sanitary Engineer to Government, who has suggested several modifications. The revised scheme, which is estimated to cost Rs. 5,00,000, is now under the consideration of the Municipal Commissioners, who have been offered a Government grant of Rs. 3,00,000 on condition that the Municipality agree to meet the balance by taking a loan from Government at 4 per cent. per annum repayable in twenty years. The Municipal Commissioners, and especially their Chairman, Khan Bahadur Khwaja Muhammad Yusuff, are to be congratulated on having, in face of difficulties of no ordinary character, recommended to Government a scheme which it may be hoped with some confidence will in the near future equip the capital of the province with an adequate water-supply. The Lieutenant-Governor has at present under consideration an application from the Municipal Commissioners of Mymensingh, who have asked for a grant of Rs. 25,000 from Government towards a scheme for improving the water-supply, the Municipality undertaking to borrow Rs. 20,000 and to contribute Rs. 5,000 from current revenues. The water filter at Faridpur continued to work well, the daily supply being 10,000 gallons. The Barisal waterworks scheme has again reached an *impasse*. A new scheme costing approximately Rs. 1,00,000, against Rs. 2,50,000 previously estimated, was prepared towards the close of the year, but the Municipal Commissioners have rejected it, and propose to revert to the original scheme, which is beyond their means. The past history of this scheme does not reflect much credit on municipal administration in Barisal. In Chittagong a scheme for supplying drinking-water from a tank by means of pumps to a reservoir, was completed early in the year, and is reported to have worked satisfactorily. No charge was made for the supply, the cost of which was borne by the Municipality. Chittagong is a rapidly rising town, and a liberal supply of good drinking-water is a pressing necessity. Experiments in artesian-well-boring were continued. Water-bearing sands were found between 350 and 450 feet, and in boring a depth of 700 feet was reached. The present bore of $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches diameter, which yielded a discharge of 5,000 gallons an hour, is regarded as insufficient. The Sanitary Engineer has drawn up a scheme which involves the sinking of two bores of 6 inches diameter each. The cost of the scheme is estimated roughly at Rs. 2,25,000 for initial outlay and Rs. 21,000 a year for maintenance. Since the close of the year a grant of Rs. 55,000 has been made to carry out the first portion of the work through the agency of the Public Works Department, but, should the experiment prove successful, the completion of the scheme will be a matter primarily for the Municipality. A grant of Rs. 2,500 was made to the Comilla Municipality, to enable them to provide two tanks reserved for drinking-water with force and lift pumps. A scheme for supplying water to the southern portion of the town of Chandpur from the River Megna has been forwarded to the Sanitary Engineer for examination. The Municipal Commissioners of Noakhali have obtained from Messrs. J. Simpson & Co. a scheme for supplying the town with water, and the town of Rampur-Boalia has submitted a revised scheme to the Sanitary Engineer.

221. There was a small decrease of Rs. 1,516 in the expenditure on public works, which almost entirely represents road-making and road-repairs. The percentage of expenditure on the year's income was 14·3, but it varied from 12 per cent. in the Dacca Division to over 23 per cent. in the Assam Valley Division. Approximately, one-tenth of this expenditure was incurred on establishments. In the Dacca Division such charges formed 7 per cent. and in the Assam Valley Districts over 14 per cent. of the total amount spent. Expenditure increased by Rs. 6,436 in the Rajshahi Division, and by Rs. 5,640 in the Assam Valley districts. In the former useful work was done in metalling roads in Bogra, Sherpur and English Bazar and also in Sirajganj, where the thoroughfares were raised above flood-level. In Rampur-Boalia, where roads are bad, a good deal of money appears to have been wasted, owing to roads having been metalled at the wrong season of the year. Of the Assam Valley municipalities, Tezpur, Dibrugarh and Goalpara showed the best results. In the Dacca Division the expenditure fell by Rs. 10,360, for which the Municipality of Dacca was alone responsible. A Government grant of Rs. 20,000 was given for repairs to roads, but a portion of the municipal funds ordinarily assigned to this object was diverted. In the Chittagong Division, though no new works of importance were undertaken, good progress was made in Comilla and Noakhali. In Chittagong, where the work of the municipality is beyond the capacity of the present staff, the Lieutenant-Governor has agreed to the appointment of an Engineer Secretary. A recurring grant of Rs. 20,000 has been made since the close of the year. The question of relieving the Chittagong Municipality of the maintenance charges of the Trunk Road is also under consideration.

Public works (Rs. 2,49,415).

PROTECTION.

Conservancy (Rs. 4,88,752).

222. Expenditure on conservancy showed an increase of Rs. 87,750, which was shared by all divisions. Eighty-one per cent. of the increase occurred, however, in the town of Dacca, where Rs. 71,000 was spent in the acquisition of sites for a depôt, a tramway line, trenching-grounds, and for other purposes connected with the new conservancy scheme, towards which Government has contributed Rs. 1,24,000. The balance of the grant has been transferred to the credit of the Executive Engineer, Special Works Division, Dacca, by whom the work will be carried out. A tender for the supply of tramway materials, locomotives, wagons, carts, etc., has been accepted, and the Municipality will take a loan of Rs. 75,000 from Government to enable them to complete this important scheme. In the Chittagong Division expenditure under "Conservancy" showed an increase of Rs. 7,835. In the town of Chittagong useful work was done in jungle-clearing, additional sweepers were recruited, and night-soil carts and bullocks were purchased. In the Rajshahi Division expenditure showed a small increase of Rs. 2,698, chiefly in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Bogra. The percentage of expenditure on conservancy to total municipal expenditure increased from 33·1 to 33·6. In six towns it exceeded 40 per cent., *viz.*, in Habiganj (49·6), Dacca (48·5), Noakhali (47·6), Shillong (45·1), Bogra (41·2), and Silchar (40·9).

Medical (Rs. 1,30,980).

223. Expenditure on hospitals and dispensaries exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 7,700, but fell short of the expenditure in 1905-1906 by over Rs. 14,000. The provincial percentage of total expenditure incurred on hospitals and dispensaries was 9, there being great variation, in the several divisions. In Rajshahi the percentage was 19·4, in Chittagong 7·8, in Dacca 7·3, in the Surma Valley and Hill districts 4·06, and in the Assam Valley districts 3·24. The highest percentages occurred at Patuakhali 28·9, Jalpaiguri 28·3, Barisal 26·8, and Nawabganj 25·6. In Barisal the expenditure of the year increased by Rs. 5,465, but this was due largely to payment of arrear contributions towards the pay of the Assistant Surgeon of the local charitable dispensary. In Bogra, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Jamalpur, and Tezpur, increased expenditure was incurred chiefly on acquisition of lands or on additions to dispensary buildings and quarters. In Sherpur (Bogra) there was an outbreak of cholera in the beginning of the year. Precautionary measures were adopted by the municipality, and the disease was stamped out. No case of plague occurred, but a sum of Rs. 1,514 was incurred in taking precautionary measures by some of the towns in the Rajshahi and Chittagong Divisions. In Noakhali Rs. 952 was spent for this purpose.

Public Instruction (Rs. 53,681).

224. Expenditure on education increased by Rs. 4,186, the town of Narayanganj alone showing an increase of Rs. 5,473 due to the construction of a new High school building towards which Government contributed, through the Municipality, Rs. 5,373. The Dacca Municipality increased its educational expenditure, as did all municipalities in the Assam Valley districts, except the Sibsagar Station and the Golaghat Union. The percentage of expenditure on education by all municipalities was 3·6. The percentage was highest in Chittagong (7·8), and lowest in the Dacca Division (2·2). It varied from 1·01 in Faridpur to 13·6 in Chittagong.

Municipal improvements.

225. In the town of Dacca several roads and lanes were repaired, at a cost of Rs. 28,667. A new slaughter-house was under construction and some land was acquired for widening the Sachipandar lane. In Narayanganj the municipal pontoon jetty was reconstructed, some drains were constructed and cess pools filled in. A large culvert was constructed in connection with the *Chasara* drainage scheme, and all roads and bridges were repaired. In Jamalpur five wooden bridges and two masonry wells were constructed. In Barisal land was acquired for a new trenching-ground, at a cost of Rs. 2,545, the Haldarbari *khal* was re-excavated, and a sum of Rs. 2,372 was spent on improvements to private tanks. It is presumed that the public are allowed to use these tanks. In Jhalakati a reserve tank was excavated. In Brahmanbaria the trenching-ground was raised. In Chandpur an important iron screw-pile bridge was completed during the year. In Noakhali a new road was opened in the heart of the town. In Rampur-Boalia ditches were filled up and a tank was re-excavated. In Jalpaiguri the wooden bridge of the Karla was reconstructed. In Bogra some roads were metalled and masonry culverts built. In Silchar a tank was excavated, and a new pattern latrine and an incinerator were constructed. The whole of the station of Shillong was cleared of the *lantana* weed. In Gauhati wooden railings were provided for the Fansi Bazar, and a masonry drain was constructed in the Uzan Bazar. The plinth of the Pan Bazar Girls' School was made *pucca*, and a new culvert was constructed near the Telegraph Office. In Tezpur a combined Donaldson's patent latrine and urinal was erected, and a large ditch at the back of the Settlement and Tahsil office was filled in. In Golaghat a tank was excavated,

The improvements effected, in the majority of cases, consisted mainly in the construction, repair and metalling of roads, the provision of additional street lamps, and the acquisition of land for municipal purposes. Several municipalities expended their funds usefully in constructing masonry wells.

Financial position of municipalities. Closing balances.

226. The total funds available for expenditure, including an opening balance of Rs. 2,99,018, amounted to Rs. 20,42,691, against Rs. 16,76,614 in 1906-1907. A total expenditure of Rs. 16,64,186 was incurred, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 3,78,505, or Rs. 83,709 in excess of the closing balance of 1906-1907. Of the total balance, however, Rs. 30,465 was actually spent during the year, but was included in the column of "Deposits" as representing the value of uncashed cheques. The actual credit balance was therefore Rs. 3,48,040. The inclusion of unspent loans and grants from Government accounts for the comparatively large balances in Dacca and Narayanganj. Unnecessarily large balances were accumulated by Barpeta, the Jorhat Union and Dibrugarh, the balances of the two first-named approximating to a year's total disbursements. Barisal had a closing balance of Rs. 11,148, but much of this was due to the non-payment to the Bengal Sanitary Board of the fees due for the preparation of a water-supply scheme. The English Bazar Municipality accumulated a balance of Rs. 10,893 to meet the cost of a drainage scheme. On the other hand, the balances of the following towns were much too small, *viz.*, Pirojpur, Rampur-Baolia, Dinajpur, Pabna, Sylhet, and Gauhati.

Loans. Financial position of indebted municipalities.

227. Sixteen municipalities had outstanding loans at the close of the year, and six fresh loans to the amount of Rs. 1,12,000 were taken during the year. Narayanganj drew Rs. 90,000 as a second instalment of the loan of Rs. 1,50,000 for waterworks, and Faridpur received a loan of Rs. 3,000 for repairing roads. Jalpaiguri and Sherpur received a loan of Rs. 2,000 each for the reconstruction of a wooden bridge and the metalling of a main road, respectively. Sirajganj was granted a loan of Rs. 5,000 for the improvement of roads in the town, and Dibrugarh Municipality a loan of Rs. 10,000 for the construction of a new market.

Audit and embezzlement.

228. The accounts of all municipalities in Eastern Bengal were audited by the Examiner of Local Fund Accounts. The system of local audit was extended during the year to the Assam municipalities, the accounts of which will in future be audited by the Examiner. All municipal institutions were relieved, with effect from the 1st April 1907, from the payment of audit charges.

No serious case of embezzlement was brought to light. In Nalchiti a tax-collector was suspected of misappropriating a small sum of money, which he eventually made good. In Nawabganj several account and rate-bill books were stolen from the office, and as a consequence the work of the municipalty was at a standstill for four months. One of the collecting sarkars was suspected, but there was insufficient evidence to justify a prosecution. The same man was prosecuted on a charge of misappropriating municipal money, but was acquitted. In Sirajganj the Overseer was suspected of tampering with the stock and store registers and of misappropriating petty articles. The man was dismissed, but there were not sufficient materials for a criminal prosecution.

General.

229. The year has been one of marked progress, and Municipal Commissioners have, in the majority of cases, discharged their duties efficiently. There were, however, some signal exceptions in Eastern Bengal, *viz.*, Barisal, Nalchiti and Pirojpur in the Dacca Division, and Rampur-Boalia in Rajshahi. Of municipal administration in Barisal the Magistrate remarks: "Procrastination and delay are its two most conspicuous features. The conservancy of the town leaves very much to be desired, and the conservancy arrangements are entirely inadequate." The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are reported to have devoted much time and energy to municipal affairs, but their efforts are apparently frustrated by the indifference or opposition of some of the Commissioners. In Nalchiti much of the money spent is reported to pass into the hands of underlings: the Magistrate proposes to appoint a competent Chairman. A change of administration in Pirojpur also seems desirable. Several complaints have reached the Commissioner of the Division of the laxity of administration in Rampur-Boalia.

Apart from these towns there are distinct indications of increasing interest. Mention has already been made of the measures being taken to improve taxation. Schemes for improving the water-supply and the drainage systems have been initiated in several towns, and with the appointment of a Sanitary Engineer for the province to advise on important schemes it is anticipated that substantial progress will be made. With the Imperial grant of three lakhs, the Local Government is now in a position to assist municipalities in effecting sanitary reforms, and aid will not be wanting if well-considered schemes are submitted.

SECTION 9.—District and Local Boards.

[*See* Resolution on the Working of District and Local Boards in Eastern Bengal and Local Boards in Assam during the year 1907-1908 ; Statistics of British India, Part VIII.]

Number of Boards.

230. By the abolition of the Shahazadpur Union in the Pabna district the number of Local Self-Government institutions decreased by one.

Constitution of District Boards (Eastern Bengal).

231. No change was made in the constitution of District Boards, the total number of members remaining at 283. Of these, 75 were *ex-officio* members, 107 were nominated and 101 elected. Two hundred and seventy-one meetings were held, or 69 more than in the previous year. Of these eleven proved abortive for want of a quorum. The average attendance of non-official members (50 per cent.) remained practically stationary and again compared unfavourably with that of official members (57 per cent.).

Constitution of Assam Local Boards.

232. The nineteen Local Boards in Assam consisted of 314 members, and the numbers of *ex-officio* (76), nominated (69), and elected (169), members remained unchanged. The number of meetings held was 133, of which five proved abortive. The number of meetings held increased by one, but the average attendance of members per meeting fell from 61 to 59 per cent.

Constitution of Eastern Bengal Local Boards.

233. The total membership (370) remained unchanged. Of this number, 21 were *ex-officio* members, 222 were nominated, and 127 elected. In thirteen subdivisions the elective system was not in force. The number of meetings held was 430, against 423 in 1906-1907. Leaving out of account meetings which proved abortive, Netrakona headed the list with 19 meetings, followed by Jamalpur with 17. Ten Boards held less than 12 meetings each, the greatest defaulters being Balurghat and Naogaon, which met only three times during the year, and Alipur, which met five times. At only one of the three meetings held by the Balurghat Local Board did a sufficient number of members attend to form a quorum. No explanation of these figures has been given, and it seems doubtful whether the establishment of the Balurghat Local Board two-and-a-half years ago was justified.

Seventy-two of the total number of meetings held proved abortive as compared with seventy-nine in the preceding year. The worst offenders were Dacca, Kishorganj, Madaripur, Pirojpur, Comilla, Nator and Sirajganj, but in most cases the number of successful meetings held was fairly satisfactory, and it is possible that in some cases an excessive number of meetings was called. This was not, however, the case with Nator, where of twelve meetings (the prescribed *minimum*) convened, no less than *half* proved abortive.

The average attendance of non-officials per meeting (12 per cent.) compared unfavourably with that of official members (56 per cent.).

Taking all Local Self-Government institutions together, the number of successful meetings increased from 660 to 746, while the number of unsuccessful meetings decreased from 97 to 88. To some extent this is satisfactory, but the falling off in the attendance of non-official members indicates that the want of interest to which reference was made in last year's report still continues.

Muhammadan representation.

234. The percentage of Muhammadan members in Eastern Bengal Boards rose from 34·3 to 35·7. In 1905-1906 the percentage was 26·16. The increase, although small, is satisfactory, but on a basis of population this community is still very inadequately represented. The difficulty of finding suitable Muhammadan gentlemen willing to serve on Boards was alluded to in last year's report, and it is regrettable that the same difficulty was experienced during the year 1907-1908. Nearly half the members of the Local Boards in Eastern Bengal are Muhammadans, but they still constitute little more than one-fourth of the District Board membership. It is noticeable that in the Noakhali district 46 per cent. of the District Board members and 60 per cent. of the Local Board members are Muhammadans.

Union Committees.

235. By the abolition of the Union Committee at Shahazadpur, the number of these institutions was reduced from ten to nine. The existing Committees are all in the Chittagong Division. Their aggregate income, including opening balances, fell from Rs. 9,793 to Rs. 9,200 and their expenditure from Rs. 5,148 to Rs. 5,049. Six Unions spent the whole, or nearly the whole, of the funds placed at their disposal.

The Union Committee at Hatia is reported to have taken no interest in local affairs, and no sum was placed at its disposal by the Noakhali Board during the year. The Committee will be re-constituted.

Three Unions—Lakhipur, Sandip and Feni (all in Noakhali)—levied local taxation under section 118 of the Act. The amounts realised (Rs. 151 in all) were insignificant. The Commissioner of the Chittagong Division recommends that the present Act should be amended, as has been done in Bengal, by removing the control of the Local Board and conferring upon Union Committees extended powers in the matter of village sanitation and water-supply. The question was discussed at the Commissioners' Conference held in September last, and the whole subject will shortly come under the consideration of Government.

Elections.

236. General elections were held in the districts of Dacca and Rajshahi, and by-elections in the districts of Mymensingh and Faridpur. The elections were unsuccessful in two thanas in Mymensingh and in one thana each in Dacca and Faridpur, owing to candidates not having been nominated in time and to the non-attendance of the prescribed proportion of voters. In these cases the members were appointed by Government.

In Assam half of the number of non-official members on the Boards, as constituted in 1906, were due to retire from 1908-1909, and elections were accordingly held in the districts of Goalpara and Sibsagar and in those of the Surma Valley. The results were successful. By-elections were also held to fill up casual vacancies.

Financial results.

237. The District and Local Boards began the year with an opening balance of Rs. 22,40,941. Their gross income amounted to Rs. 50,90,362 and the total gross expenditure to Rs. 50,94,413, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 22,36,890. The expenditure incurred during the year was thus met from receipts, and opening balances were left practically untouched.

(a) Income. Provincial rates.

238. There was a net increase of about half a lakh under Provincial Rates. There was some increase due to revaluations and improved collections in Dhubri, Goalpara, Dacca and Mymensingh, but in Bakarganj a portion of the cesses due at the last *kist* of the preceding year was paid in the current year. On the other hand, mauzadars in the Assam Valley failed in many cases to credit local rates before the close of the year.

Miscellaneous.

239. Miscellaneous receipts showed a falling off of Rs. 30,797, of which the Assam Boards were responsible for Rs. 24,139. The decrease in Assam is mainly nominal, being due to the inclusion under this head in 1906-1907 of collections from markets which are now credited under "Land Revenue."

Civil Works.

240. The increase of Rs. 41,934 under Civil Works was contributed to by all the divisions, and was mainly due to a general expansion in ferry receipts and to larger contributions to works of public utility having been made by private persons and the Jamalpur Municipality. In the Rajshahi Division, the increase was due to the inclusion under this head, for the first time, of local subscriptions for school buildings, which have hitherto been credited as "Education" receipts.

Contributions.

241. The receipts under "Contributions" showed an increase of Rs. 3,06,350, which was mainly contributed by the Eastern Bengal Boards. The increase in Eastern Bengal is due to various causes. A special grant from Provincial revenues of Rs. 1,70,244 was made to District Boards for expenditure on primary education during the year. Grants for the improvement of communications to the Eastern Bengal Boards were increased by Rs. 19,000, and the Government grant of Rs. 60,078 made to the Mymensingh District Board for communications in 1906-1907 was not credited until after the close of that year. The grants made to Boards in Assam for primary education and for the improvement of communications were increased by Rs. 17,450 and Rs. 24,000, respectively.

The income of the Eastern Bengal Boards, excluding opening balances and debt, was Rs. 32,47,532, and of this 31·3 per cent. was contributed by Government. The Assam Boards had an income of Rs. 14,55,626, of which Government contributed 35·4 per cent. It is interesting to note that of the total income of the Boards in the province, roughly 48 per cent. was raised by local taxation: 6 per cent. realised from pounds, 8 per cent. from ferries, while over 32 per cent. was contributed by Government.

(b) Expenditure.

242. The total expenditure (excluding "Debt") exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 81,854. The increase was shared by all divisions, except Chittagong and Rajshahi. Noticeable variations occurred chiefly under the heads "Education," "Civil Works," "Medical," "Miscellaneous," and "Scientific and other Minor Departments." Under "Scientific and other Minor Departments" the increase (Rs. 22,601) is distributed chiefly amongst the Assam Boards, and was due to the contributions made by some Local Boards in the Assam Valley to the Jorhat Industrial Exhibition, and by the

Silchar, Karimganj, South Sylhet and Habiganj Boards to the Surma Valley Tea Association for the entertainment of a Veterinary Surgeon. A contribution made by the Malda Board towards a local exhibition, and a sum of Rs. 1,000 spent by the North Sylhet Local Board on a cattle show, are also included under this head. The expenditure under "Miscellaneous" was Rs. 15,002 less than in 1906-1907. The falling off in the Assam Boards is nominal and is attributed to the transfer of funds spent on the improvement of markets from the head "Miscellaneous" to "Land Revenue." In the Rajshahi Division the decrease of Rs. 5,568 was due to the fact that no expenditure was incurred during the year by the Malda Board on the acquisition of private ferries, against a large expenditure on this account in the previous year. Contributions from Local to Provincial increased by Rs. 13,491, the bulk of which was paid by the Rajshahi Division on account of banking fees due for the last two years. Under the orders of the Government of India District and Local Boards have been relieved of these charges with effect from the year 1907-1908, and also of the charge which was formerly imposed on them for the audit of their accounts. The amounts realised in 1907-1908 have since been restored.

Closing balances.

243. The aggregate closing balances of the Boards (excluding deposits and the value of uncashed cheques) rose from Rs. 14,78,950 to Rs. 16,28,447. The increase was common to all divisions, except the Surma Valley, and was largest in the Rajshahi Division, where it amounted to Rs. 1,21,128. Of this amount, the Dinajpur and Rangpur Boards were responsible for more than two-thirds, a result due to inaccurate budgetting. Many Boards in the Dacca and Assam Valley Divisions also failed during the year to work up to the sanctioned programme. The Commissioner of Dacca explains that in some cases the excessive surpluses of Boards were due to the delay in getting projects for work sanctioned. The appointment of a separate Inspector of Local Works in the Dacca Division will, it is hoped, remove this defect. In the Assam Valley the balances of the Boards were Rs. 4,57,758 against Rs. 4,16,770 in the preceding year. The increase is unsatisfactory. The Dhubri Board again closed the year with a balance of no less than Rs. 1,39,134, or nearly double its ordinary income. The inability of this Board to utilise its resources was referred to last year.

The Dhubri Board received an allotment of Rs. 15,000 from the grant for communications, a larger sum than any other Board in the Assam Valley received, but it seems doubtful whether, in view of its accumulated balances, the Dhubri Board should receive any portion of this grant. It has been suggested that the inability of some Boards to spend up to their allotments for public works is due to the fact that the financial year ends on the 31st March, whereas the working season extends in some cases to June. The question of the alteration of the official year for Boards has been considered, as the transactions of District and Local Boards are now excluded from the general accounts. It appears, however, that no change is possible without legislation, and that, although the funds of Boards are now excluded, their estimates are nevertheless appended to the Provincial estimates, and their accounts included as an appendix to the Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Government of India, which are presented to Parliament. The period of the year for which accounts are rendered by Boards must for these reasons remain unchanged for the present, but the question will be further considered when the amendment of the Local Self-Government Act is undertaken. The position has, however, materially improved in that closing balances may now, under adequate sanction, be drawn upon. The works which are not completed by 31st March should always be vigorously pushed on in the following year. At the same time every care should be taken to forecast accurately the expenditure which can be incurred within the year.

Loans.

244. The District Board of Bogra obtained a loan of Rs. 10,000 from Government for the improvement of roads. No other loans were taken during the year. Besides Bogra, Rangpur (Rs. 62,888) and Dinajpur (Rs. 72,333) were the only Boards with outstanding loans on the 31st March 1908.

Education.

245. The total expenditure on this important branch of the Boards' administration rose from Rs. 12,11,212 to Rs. 13,66,579, the increase being common to all divisions. The largest increase (Rs. 53,045) occurred in the Dacca Division, and was chiefly due to outlay on the construction of primary school buildings. In Eastern Bengal Rs. 3,74,516, or 41·7 per cent. of the total expenditure, was incurred on lower primary education, while in Assam Rs. 3,69,260, or 78·8 per cent. of the total expenditure, was devoted to this object. In Eastern Bengal 28·4 per cent. of the total expenditure on lower primary education was incurred on buildings and apparatus, while in the Assam districts the percentage fell from 19 to 14·2. The Imperial grant for primary education in the Eastern Bengal districts was withheld in the previous year, as the grants (Rs. 2,57,200) made for this purpose towards the close of 1905-1906 had not been

utilised. During 1907-1908 a grant of Rs. 1,70,000 was made. The Eastern Bengal Boards appear to have almost entirely utilised the grants for the two years, with the exception of Dinajpur and Dacca, where the unspent balances were Rs. 35,810 and Rs. 17,086, respectively. By the help of these grants considerable progress has been made in the improvement of primary education in the Eastern Bengal districts. Three hundred new schools have been constructed, and selected primary schools have been converted to class-I primary schools, with improved status. Some attempts have been made to develop female education, and increased aid has been given to *muktabs* and *Koran* schools. In Assam earlier arrangements for the utilisation of the Imperial grant were made and, as the original programme of construction is complete, the annual grant is now absorbed in recurring expenditure.

The number of lower primary schools in Eastern Bengal, maintained and aided, rose from 12,020 to 12,263 and in Assam from 2,611 to 2,706.

The following remarks made by the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Districts, on village primary education are of interest :—

> Considering the importance of primary education, it is to be regretted that the proportion of qualified teachers is only one in three in Habiganj, the most advanced area, and less elsewhere. The multiplication of these schools, for which no qualified teachers are available, carries a point for consideration, and it is open to question whether the money spent could not be more usefully extended in some other direction; for instance, in the improvement of communications, the provision of medical relief, tanks and sanitation generally. It was noted on a recent visit to Habiganj, where the Board's expenditure on education now amounts to about Rs. 50,000, that the work of inspecting primary and other schools had been entirely neglected by the Boards' inspecting staff of Deputy and Assistant Inspectors. This Board spends the largest amount of any on education, but if, as seems to be the case, the schools are left to look after themselves for months at a time, there is no security that the money is not being absolutely wasted.

There is much force in these remarks, and the recruitment of qualified teachers is a matter of pressing necessity and of some difficulty. The Boards concerned have doubtless been invited to repair, so far as is possible, the defect to which the Commissioner has drawn attention. The Commissioner of the Dacca Division is also not satisfied that Boards have yet sufficiently realised the important duty entrusted to them of organising the introduction of new Class-I primary schools.

The Pabna Technical School has continued in popularity, and is the most advanced institution of its class in the province. For the Sibpur Sub-Overseers' examination it sent up 24 candidates, of whom 18 passed, while at the Survey final examination 29 out of 43 candidates were successful. The Rangpur Board purchased the quarters of the late District Engineer at a cost of Rs. 8,810 for a laboratory class of the technical school and a boarding house for the students. The Diamond Jubilee Industrial School at Rampur Boalia was affiliated to the Civil Engineering College, Sibpur. The Noakhali Board sanctioned a scholarship of Rs. 10 a month tenable at the Dacca School of Engineering and another of the same value tenable at the Calcutta School of Art. The artizan class attached to the Kashi Kishore Technical School was maintained by the Mymensingh Board, and the Elliot Artizan School by the Tippera Board. On the whole, the progress made in technical and industrial education cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory. It may be that Boards, left as they are to their own initiative, and without clear lines of guidance laid down, are not in the best position to fulfil their obligation in this respect, but it is hoped that this will be remedied by the industrial conference which will shortly meet at Dacca. That conference, in addition to advising Government as to the nature of State assistance to be given in fostering indigenous industries, will take stock of the whole position in regard to technical and industrial education, and indicate the direction in which development should proceed.

246. The expenditure under this head showed an increase of Rs. 15,602, to which the Assam Boards contributed more than two-thirds owing to the opening of four new dispensaries and to increased outlay on buildings. In Eastern Bengal, the Boards in the Rajshahi and Chittagong Divisions showed an increase of Rs. 4,605, partly due to the payment of arrear contributions towards the pay of the Government medical officers lent to the Rajshahi and Noakhali Boards. The number of dispensaries maintained by Boards fell from 136 to 134. One hundred and seventy-three dispensaries were aided by the Boards at a cost of Rs. 1,36,646, compared with 165 aided in the previous year at a cost of Rs. 1,24,473. The divisional reports show that five new dispensaries were opened, four in the Assam Valley and one in the Rajshahi Division, and that three dispensaries were closed, two in the Dacca Division and one in the Surma Valley. A number of Boards (Mymensingh, Tippera, Rajshahi, Rangpur, North Sylhet, South Sylhet, Habiganj and Sunamganj) employed itinerant doctors to provide medical relief in localities affected by cholera, etc., while effective measures Medical.

were taken by other Boards (Chittagong, Bakarganj, Bogra, Dhubri, Gauhati, Tezpur, Mangaldai, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, and Dibrugarh) to provide medical relief by deputing doctors and compounders to the interior during the outbreak of epidemics. Steps were taken in the Assam Valley to popularise the European method of medical treatment by distributing medicine to the bazar people, and the Commissioner made small grants to seven Boards in his division for this purpose. Several Boards entertained the services of midwives and lady doctors. The Muhammadan lady who was sent last year by the Mymensingh Board to the Dacca Medical School continued under training as a Hospital Assistant. Steps are being taken to afford permanent medical relief to certain thanas in the Mymensingh district which have at present no charitable medical institutions of any kind, public or private.

The Chairman of the Bakarganj District Board recorded the following remarks on the dispensaries in that district:—

> The scheme for the re-organisation of the dispensaries has now been completed, and will shortly come before the Board. The dispensaries as a whole are miserable places, the staff is badly paid, very little inspection is done, and, in short, this branch of the District Board is extremely bad. It is proposed to reduce the number of dispensaries, and, to put the buildings under the Engineering Department. The question of appointing an Assistant Surgeon for the regular inspection of the dispensaries will be considered with the re-organization scheme.

Sanitation. 247. The expenditure rose from Rs. 10,731 to Rs. 12,177, but these figures do not include the amount spent on the improvement of water-supply and drainage. A general increase occurred in all divisions, except Chittagong, for which no figures are returned, a sum of Rs. 1,064 spent by the Tippera District Board on the excavation of the Bayak *khal* to improve the sanitary condition of the locality being returned under drainage. The scheme for improving the sanitary condition of Manikganj was completed at a cost of Rs. 4,124, the operations being chiefly confined to earthwork, clearance of jungle, and construction of *pucca* drains. The Faridpur Board undertook sanitary operations in certain villages, local Sanitary Committees being appointed. The experiment proved a failure. In Rajshahi deep holes on roadsides were filled up and water channels were cleared. As in the previous year, the Dinajpur Board appointed a Health Officer and three sweepers to look after the sanitation of the Raiganj town and distributed quinine in localities affected with malaria. A latrine was also constructed by this Board at Balurghat at a cost of Rs. 1,698. In the Surma Valley the most important work undertaken during the year was the improvement of the Lakhipur Bazar, to which the Silchar Board contributed Rs. 1,000. Advantage was taken of the destruction of the old shops by fire to reconstruct the whole bazar on a new plan, ample space being provided for the weekly market. The sanitary work done by Boards was of a varied, though useful, character, and included mainly preventive measures against cholera and other epidemic diseases, the clearance of jungle, excavation and disinfection of tanks and wells, and the making of sanitary arrangements at fairs, *melas*, etc.

Public Works. 248. The total allotment for Public Works amounted to Rs. 28,51,377 and the expenditure to Rs. 25,23,480, against Rs. 31,90,750 and Rs. 26,38,065, respectively, in 1906-1907. The lapse was 11·5 per cent. as against 17·3 per cent. in the previous year and nearly 27 per cent. in 1905-1906. The steady reduction in the percentage of lapse is satisfactory, but the fall in expenditure is regrettable. The Dhubri Local Board failed to spend 38·3 per cent. of its allotment. The Faridpur Board comes next, with a lapse of 34·89 per cent. Sunamganj, Dacca, Mangaldai and South Sylhet follow with 32·74, 29·8, 25·94, and 23·46 per cent., respectively. The heavy lapse in Dhubri is said to be due to the expenditure of only Rs. 7,568 out of an allotment of Rs. 17,070 made over to the Public Works Department for certain works, to the failure of contractors to work up to sanctioned estimates, and to other special causes. The lapse in Faridpur was mainly due to a sum of Rs. 3,197 only having been expended out of Rs. 38,000 provided for the construction of a road from Faridpur to Bhanga, work on which could not be started owing to delay in the acquisition of the land and to a lapse of Rs. 8,470 on the demarcation of roadside lands and the construction of a bridge on the Jessore road.

The lapse in Dacca (Rs. 71,257) is due to a sum of Rs. 32,588 set apart for works in connection with the Mirpur bridge having remained unspent owing to the representations of the Chamber of Commerce against the construction of the bridge, and to the inability of the Board to spend the full allotments on four other important works. The lapse in Mangaldai is said to be due to the difficulty of obtaining labour and to the non-completion of the Deroi bridge by the Public Works Department. No explanation has been given of the large lapse in Sunamganj and South Sylhet.

Water-supply and water-works. 249. There has been in recent years a steady increase of expenditure under this head. The total outlay in Eastern Bengal rose from Rs. 64,832 to Rs. 84,892, of which Rs. 68,595 was spent on original works and Rs. 16,297 on repairs. The corre-

sponding figures in Assam were Rs. 48,637 and Rs. 11,692, respectively. The increased expenditure in Eastern Bengal was shared by all divisions, but the Chittagong Board again failed to incur any expenditure under this head, although the divisional report discloses that some of the rural areas in this district stand in need of good drinking water. A belief appears to have been current amongst the villagers in Tippera that the by-laws of the District Board would be made a means of oppression to them if they allowed their tanks to be reserved for drinking purposes. A special tour was made by the Vice-Chairman of the Board with a view to removing these misapprehensions, with satisfactory results. The Boards of the Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions increased expenditure by Rs. 13,490 and Rs. 6,058, respectively, chiefly on the excavation of tanks and wells. Local Boards in Assam, with the exception of Silchar and Nowgong, did something to fulfil their obligations in this respect, but many Boards failed to take advantage of the grants which are given for this purpose by the Sanitary Board, as the conditions imposed by Government were not considered acceptable. These conditions were that one-third of the cost would be contributed by Government, if the villagers and the local body concerned would also contribute one-third each. The Lieutenant-Governor has recently relaxed these conditions and the Sanitary Board have now been authorised to make grants for the improvement of rural water-supply under such agreements as they may find practicable and best suited to local conditions. It is hoped that the apathy now apparent in some localities in regard to this important matter will shortly be overcome. Rupees 30,600 was placed at the disposal of the Sanitary Board for distribution to local bodies during the year, of which Rs. 30,481 was made over to those Boards which accepted the conditions imposed by Government.

Drainage.

250. No drainage work of importance was undertaken by any Board. The total expenditure under this head was Rs. 18,191, of which Rs. 12,094 was spent on original works and Rs. 6,097 on repairs. The District Board of Tippera expended Rs. 6,570 in re-excavating 14 *khals*, and Pabna paid Rs. 3,582 on account of compensation for land in connection with the drainage of the Cheroil *bil*. The Gaibanda Local Board in Rangpur cut a drain of about a mile from the centre of the town, which improved the health of the town considerably. The Mandakata embankment, which was seriously damaged by the earthquake of 1897, was repaired by the Gauhati Local Board.

Veterinary.

251. Veterinary charges in Eastern Bengal rose from Rs. 11,238 to Rs. 16,130, the expenditure being, as usual, restricted to the maintenance of veterinary dispensaries, the entertainment of veterinary staffs, and to the grant of veterinary scholarships. The Assam Local Boards spent Rs. 16,866 under this head. All the Boards in Eastern Bengal contributed to the expenditure incurred during the year except Jalpaiguri, where the pay of the Veterinary Assistant is met from the Government grant for the improvement of *khas mahals*. In Rangpur a veterinary dispensary was constructed at a cost of Rs. 7,500, of which Rs. 4,000 was contributed by Srimati Bhabasundari Debya Chaudhurani in the name of her deceased husband. The Pabna Board spent Rs. 445 in maintaining three bulls for improving the breed of cattle. In Assam also people are beginning to appreciate the veterinary services, and most of the Boards now have their own assistants. All the Boards in the Surma Valley (except Hailakandi and Sunamganj) continued to subscribe towards the veterinary staff maintained by the Tea Association, the two Boards excepted having made their own arrangements. A very successful cattle show was held by the North Sylhet Local Board in January 1908. A large number of cattle were entered, and competition was keen. Scholarships at the Belgachia Veterinary College were provided by all the Boards of the Dacca Division and by the Tippera and Malda Boards, while Rajshahi increased the value of its scholarship from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 a month.

The veterinary staff in the employ of the Boards continued to prove their utility in combating outbreaks of cattle-disease, but in some districts work was hampered by the want of qualified men. The Government has for some time past had under consideration the best method of remedying this defect, and it has recently been decided to provincialize the veterinary service, local bodies being allowed the services of members of the Provincial staff on payment of a portion of the cost.

Development of local industries.

252. The Dacca District Board appointed a sericulturist for the cultivation of castor-oil plants for raising *eri*-silk-worms, but his work having proved unsatisfactory he was discharged. Steps were taken to encourage the use of the fly-shuttle loom. These looms are also said to be largely used in Bakarganj, and it has been suggested that advances should be made to selected weavers to purchase improved appliances. Rupees 200 was sanctioned by the Mymensingh Board for the award of prizes at the

Agricultural and Industrial Exhibitions held during the year. The artisan class attached to the Kashi Kishore Technical School was maintained, but the weaving class proved a failure and had to be closed. The Malda Board continued to maintain a weaving school. A Sericultural Overseer was entertained by the Bogra Board to look after mulberry cultivation, of which there is said to have been a revival. The Elliott Artisan School continued to do good work. The Tippera Board sanctioned eleven scholarships for the Artisan Department of this school in addition to a textile scholarship of Rs. 15 a month to a student studying in the Victoria Technical Institute, Byculla. A similar scholarship was sanctioned by the Dacca Board for a student who is learning tanning and other branches of leather manufacture at the Madras Government Tannery. In the Assam Valley little has been done in the direction of encouraging industrial development, except that the Jorhat Local Board held an Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, which was very successful.

A temporary teacher of weaving on Rs. 45 a month was entertained by the North Sylhet Board and deputed to villages to demonstrate the use of the improved fly-shuttle loom. The Chairman writes:—"The instruction has roused such enthusiasm among Jugis (people of the weaver-class) that five looms have already been set up, and more looms would have been set up but for the poverty of the people."

A special officer has been appointed by the Government since the close of the year to survey the industrial position and prospects in this province, and his report will be considered by a representative conference which will probably meet in Dacca in February 1909.

Arboriculture.

253. An aggregate sum of Rs. 9,797 was spent on arboriculture by the Boards, the largest outlay (Rs. 2,614) having been incurred by Bakarganj in providing iron gabions and maintaining existing trees. Tree-planting is intended to be carried out according to a quinquennial programme, but it is by no means clear that this has been done in all cases. Since the close of the year the attention of Commissioners of Divisions and, through them, of local bodies has again been prominently drawn to this subject, and it has been arranged that the Director of Agriculture shall be associated in the preparation and working out of schemes for planting trees. The Director of Agriculture will also inspect and advise upon arboricultural operations generally, and it is proposed that he should be assisted in these duties by a Provincial Arboricultural Expert. Arrangements are being made for the issue of a Manual of Arboriculture for the province, and the Director of Agriculture will supply District Boards with model working schemes, and will arrange for the training of an employé of each District Board. In Bakarganj and in Assam roadside avenues are not required to the same extent as elsewhere, owing to the country being generally well-wooded, and to the danger of unmetalled roads being spoilt during the rainy season by the water dripping from overhanging trees.

SECTION 10.—Military and Volunteering.

Volunteer Corps.

254. The undermentioned Volunteer Corps were in existence during the year 1907-1908:—

(i) Surma Valley Light Horse.
(ii) Assam Valley Light Horse.
(iii) Eastern Bengal Volunteer Rifle
(iv) Assam-Bengal Railway Volunteer Rifles.

The total number of volunteers was:—officers 99; rank and file 1,294. The number of reservists was:—officers 7; rank and file 170.

These were made up as follows:—

—	Officers.	Rank and file.	Reservists.	
			Officers.	Rank and file.
1	2	3	4	5
Surma Valley Light Horse ...	32	265	...	14
Assam Valley Light Horse ...	37	365	7	99
Eastern Bengal Volunteer Rifles ..	10	284	...	51
Assam-Bengal Railway Volunteer Rifles.	20	380	...	6
Total ...	99	1,294	7	170

255. Captain C. A. R. Hutchinson, 41st Dogras, having been appointed Brigade Major of the Assam Brigade, took over his duties on the 6th February 1908. Brigade Staff.

SECTION 11.—Marine.

The Port of Chittagong.

256. The income of the ordinary Port Fund for the year 1907-1908 amounted to Rs. 2,21,147, as compared with Rs. 1,89,543 in 1906-1907, showing an increase of Rs. 31,604, or 16·67 per cent. The expenditure (inclusive of the amounts spent on capital account) amounted to Rs. 1,70,316 during the year, against Rs. 1,07,293 in the previous year. Financial.

257. The revetment of the right bank of the river below the railway terminal jetties has been carried down 7,000 feet, out of about $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles to be revetted along that bank. The cost up to the 31st March 1907 was met wholly from contributions made to the Port Trust for the purpose from Imperial and Provincial Funds, the amount of the Imperial grant available for it being Rs. 3,60,324. With effect from the 1st April 1907 half the cost of revetment work was met from the Government grant and the other half from loans taken by the Port Commissioners from Government at 4 per cent. interest. The total allotment made to the Port Trust from Imperial and Provincial Funds for revetment work up to the 31st March 1908 was Rs. 9,02,294. In 1907-1908 a sum of Rs. 2,93,000 was borrowed by the Port Commissioners from Government on account of the capital cost of the revetment. The expenditure actually incurred on the work during the year 1907-1908 was Rs. 6,88,273, against Rs. 1,96,940 in the previous year. The increase was due to the value of land and the cost of 150 railway waggons, amounting to Rs. 2,69,450 and Rs. 2,55,364, respectively. Improvements to the Port.

During the year the Local Government, on the representation of the Port Commissioners, raised its annual grant for the working and maintenance of the dredger from Rs. 54,624 to Rs. 92,000 from 1908-1909 to 1911-1912. The dredger *Karnafuli I* commenced working on the 2nd April 1907. The Inner Bar was permanently improved by nearly 4 feet. The dredging operations of the year were satisfactory.

258. The number of different classes of vessels berthed at the Port during the year increased by 29, with a net tonnage of 51,910. Also 369 vessels with a net aggregate tonnage of 477,906 cleared out of the Port during the year, against 354 vessels with a net aggregate tonnage of 437,399 in the previous year. Shipping.

259. The values of the imports and exports of the Foreign and Coasting trade in 1907-08 amounted to 722·49 lakhs of rupees, against 861·01 lakhs in the previous year, showing a decrease of 138·52 lakhs. The decrease was mainly in the coasting import and export trades, due to the drop in the importation of rice from Burma, which had been abnormal in the previous year, and also to the smaller amounts of treasure sent to Burma in consequence for the purchase of rice. Trade.

260. Two disastrous fires occurred at the Railway terminal jetties on the 12th October and the 24th December 1907, causing considerable damage to the sheds attached to Jetty No. I and Berth No. 3, owing to which the Assam-Bengal Railway sustained heavy loss. But for these disasters the exportation of jute would have shown considerable increase, as in previous years. All possible precautionary measures are now being taken by the Railway authorities in reconstruction of the sheds to prevent, if possible, and at least to minimize and extinguish, such fires in future. Fires at the Railway terminal jetties.

261. The Kutubdia and Norman's Point lighthouses have been maintained in efficient order and have shown their respective lights without interruption throughout the year. No complaints were reported as to the exhibition of the lights. Both light-houses were frequently inspected by the Port Officer. The light vessel *Sarsuti* was removed from her station on the *South Patches* shoal, 40 miles below the entrance to the river, to Chittagong on the 2nd January 1908, and was replaced in position on the 2nd March 1908. The leading lights on the *Karnafuli* river were regularly shown, when requisitioned, to vessels crossing the Outer and Inner Bars at night. Port appliances.

262. The actual receipts of the Pilotage Fund for the year amounted to Rs. 20,249, against Rs. 26,323 in the preceding year, and the expenditure was Rs. 56,562, against Rs. 62,056 in 1906-1907. The sanction of the Government of India was obtained to the formation, with effect from 1st April 1908, of a new fund to be called "The Chittagong Pilotage Fund" (an Excluded Local Fund), to be administered by the Port Commissioners, in place of the old Pilotage Fund, which formed a part of the Provincial revenues. Pilotage Fund.

263. The general health of the Port was reported to be good, and no plague case was imported. Health of the Port.

CHAPTER IV.—PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

SECTION 1.—Agriculture and Horticulture.

[*See* Report of the Agriculture Department, Eastern Bengal and Assam, for the year ending the 30th June 1908.]

New experts.

264. The Agricultural Chemist appointed for the province began work in December 1907. But the officer selected for the post of Economic Botanist is still under training at Pusa. It is expected that he will take up his duties by February 1909.

The delay in the construction of the laboratory building and the residences for the Agricultural Experts at Dacca has been a serious drawback to the progress of their work. The Fibre Expert still has his headquarters at Pusa.

Honorary Assistants.

265. The Department is gradually attracting to itself a body of practical and enthusiastic honorary assistants, who hold progressive ideas as to the development of agriculture. They have rendered very great service in the way of supplying the Department with prompt and accurate information regarding the condition and prospect of crops and outbreaks of insect and fungus pests. The number of these gentlemen on the 30th June 1908 was 35, including 9 Agricultural Associates, who are men of sufficient practical experience to be able to make every year a field demonstration of some improvement recommended by the Department.

Agricutural Associations.

266. Two divisional and two district agricultural associations were in existence at the close of the year. Of these the two district associations—one in Bogra and the other in Rangpur—did some useful work. Since the close of the year the Rangpur Association has shown signs of vigorous life in developing the Rangpur farm which has been handed over to it with an annual Government grant of Rs. 3,000 and supplementary subsidies from the District Board. In the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet a special committee of the Local Board has been constituted to look after veterinary and agricultural matters, especially the breeding of cattle, and measures for the destruction of insects injurious to crops.

Agricultural stations.

267. The work done on the Central Farm at Dacca consisted chiefly of reclamation of land and levelling and laying out of experimental areas. There was little opportunity for properly conducted agricultural experiments. At Rajshahi, the most advanced of the agricultural stations, a cessation of rain from the middle of July to the end of September made the transplanting of winter rice impossible and considerably interfered with the success of several other crops. The best results were obtained from sugarcane and potatoes. The chief experiment made on the Jorhat station was a comparative test of nine varieties of sugarcane. The variety known as striped Mauritius was found to be the best of the "first-year" plants. This variety headed the list in regard to weight of cane per acre, richness of juice, and total sugar content: while of the "second-year" cane Bengal *khari* cane gave the best all-round results. Rangpur having been found unsuitable as a tobacco station, a new station was opened during the year at Burirhat some six miles distant. As already stated, the Rangpur Farm was handed over on the 31st July 1908 to the local Agricultural Association, who will work it mainly as a demonstration station with the aid of grants from Government and the District Board. Valuation by English experts of the foreign tobaccos grown at Rangpur have been obtained but are not very promising. Fresh samples will, however, be sent with more careful packing. At Wahjain three distillations of oil from lemon grass were made with the very encouraging result that at an expenditure of Rs. 133 oil was obtained worth Rs. 281-12. The only obstacle to a rapid extension of this new industry is the difficulty of finding a steady market for the oil.

The principal experiments conducted at the Upper Shillong Farm were in connection with the spraying of the potato crops with Bordeaux mixture. These experiments have been very successful. Cattle breeding has been introduced there on a fairly large scale and there is a strong local demand for the imported Patna bulls. The fruits and vegetables from the Shillong fruit farm commanded a large sale and these two stations have been efficiently managed throughout the year.

Agricultural Development—(a) Cotton.

268. Every attempt to grow different varieties of cotton on a field scale in the plains has failed. At Baikuntapur, on the low hills of South Sylhet, five varieties of cotton were however grown, of which *dharwar* and *buri* gave fairly good crops. Spence's cotton is being cultivated with fair success on two plantations—one in Cachar and the other near Sylhet town.

269. Jute cultivation, which has now become established in all parts of the Assam Valley, extended very considerably during the year. Two jute farms were started in North Kamrup under European management, and are reported to have obtained good yields of first-class fibre. (b) Jute.

270. The potatoes usually grown in the plains are of the poorest and smallest description. But attempts made at different places to grow potatoes from selected seed of the Darjeeling (Patna Red) and Nainital varieties were generally successful. (c) Potato.

271. The Dacca *gandari* sugarcane, which was very successful on Rajshahi farm, was also tried in Bogra and Rangpur. The Bengal *khari* cane gave the best all-round results on the Jorhat station and also on a private farm in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. (d) Sugarcane.

272. Some small experiments were made with rice at Government expense on the Dacca station and also on the Chittagong Model Farm and the Noakhali *khas mahal* garden. In the former, the fine *aus* rice of the Central Provinces was found to give a smaller yield than the local *ballam*, but greater than the local *chekual*. Assam *hatisail* and Burdwan *dadkhani* winter rice were contrasted with local varieties and the results are said to have been in favour of the Assam variety. Of the many experiments made at the expense of private individuals the only ones that deserve mention are the trials of Bengal *harmkani* and of Java paddy by an Associate of Sibsagar. The former yielded over 21 and the latter over 24 maunds per acre. The Java paddy is said to make a particularly good table rice. As a result of many experiments on agricultural stations it has been found that 3 maunds of bonemeal and 30 seers of saltpetre per acre is a manure suitable and profitable for most winter paddy soils. A sum of Rs. 500 a year for two years has been granted for a demonstration under the management of the Subdivisional Officer of Mokokchang, with the object of introducing terraced rice cultivation among the Ao Nagas, who at present do not practice irrigation. In the Lushai Hills the Superintendent has made water channels and is using every means to persuade the people to adopt permanent rice cultivation in the valleys in preference to nomadic *jhuming*. (e) Rice.

Insect pests do great damage to rice crops in all parts of the province. But in the year under report they did much less injury than usual. Many reports of minor outbreaks were received, but usually too late for any action to be taken; and until the Department has an entomological officer on its staff, it will not be able to render much assistance in this respect.

263. Wheat is not a crop that has ever promised to be very profitable in the plains district of this province. Repeated attemps to introduce it in the plains of Assam have ended in failure. The Superintendent, Lushai Hills, however, obtained some success with wheat sown on three small areas in his district and is repeating the experiment on a larger scale in 1908-1909. (f) Wheat.

274. The orange tree blight continues to spread throughout the Khasi Hills with the result of a rapidly diminishing supply of the fruit. Unfortunately no assured means have yet been found for checking the disease. The Imperial Mycologist is still investigating the subject and in the meantime several preventive measures are being tried by the Department. (g) Orange trees.

275. From the 31st March 1907 till the end of October 1908 the Bengal Silk Committee continued to administer the sericultural operations in Malda, Rajshahi and Bogra. A separate Superintendent of Sericulture has been appointed for this province since the close of the year and placed in charge of the two nurseries in Rajshahi district. Sericulture.

In order to rescue the silk-worm rearing industry from decay it has been decided to adopt Pasteur's system in this province, and with the object of providing an adequate supply of seed cocoons free from disease negotiations were made for the acquisition of a permanent site at Mirganj on the bank of the Ganges. On this site rearing houses will be erected capable of producing 1,000 maunds of seed cocoons a year. A proposal to open a second large grainerie in Bogra and possibly others in Malda is under consideration.

Experiments made in Dacca by the District Board and in Tippera by a private individual with *eri* silk cultivation did not yield much result. But those made at the Shillong Fruit Farm with the European univoltine silk-worm proved as successful as in previous years. The silk produced there evoked most flattering encomiums from the representatives of the Bengal Silk Company.

276. The three students who were sent to the Poona College of Science in 1907 made good progress in their studies. Two more students were selected in 1908, but one of them could not join on account of illness. The newly-appointed Agricultural Agricultural and Sericultural Education.

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Supervisor and the Superintendent of the Rangpur Farm received practical training at the Pusa Agricultural College. Two students selected at the close of the year for the posts of Mycological and Entomological Collectors are also under training at Pusa.

Four apprentices are being trained on the Dacca Farm in practical methods of cultivation. The Puthia Charani Ward's estate in Rajshahi offered five scholarships of Rs. 10 each to sons of cultivators, tenable at the Rajshahi Farm, but no suitable students could be induced to stay.

It has been arranged that the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam will contribute, for the next eight years, one-third of the cost of up-keep of the proposed Bengal Agricultural College, which is expected to be opened in October 1909, and during that period will send fourteen students annually for training at that College.

The Sericultural School at Rajshahi came under Government management from January 1907 and has since been reorganised. The want of a competent Headmaster is keenly felt. Seven students, who passed out of the school at the end of 1907, were each awarded a microscope and a money grant of Rs. 250 to enable them to construct a suitable house for rearing silk-worms. The Government of Bengal has proposed to send for training at this school some six students annually and to make a proportional contribution towards the up-keep of the school. But no definite arrangement has yet been made.

SECTION 2.—Weather and Crops.

[*See* Report on the Season and Crops of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Character of the Season.

277. The year under review was, in contrast with the two preceding years, one of comparative drought. Up to the end of May the season was practically normal, but the autumn rains closed early and were for the province as a whole a complete failure. The average autumn rainfall for the whole province is 6 inches, but in 1907 the average was less than 2 inches. The Rajshahi Division suffered most severely from the drought. In the year 1907-1908 prices of rice were steadier than in the preceding year, and, though they rose to a height of Rs. 5-7 per maund in June, a good *aus* harvest then afforded some relief and, as the succeeding winter rice crops turned out better than was expected, prices slowly declined till the end of the year. During the last three years the outturn of each winter harvest has been considerably below normal, and the deficiency thus caused has been intensified by short *bhadoi* harvests.

Area under cultivation.

278. Despite the returns furnished by some districts showing a large lapse of cultivated land to waste, the area under cultivation is steadily increasing in most parts of the province, under the stimulus of the high prices ruling for all agricultural produce. Cachar and several districts of the Assam Valley, in the temporarily-settled portions of which field records are kept up to date, showed large extensions, as did also Bakarganj, Tippera and Malda. The increase of over 36,000 acres reported from Bakarganj is due primarily to the reclamation of waste land in the Sunderbans.

Though the area under cultivation increased, the early cessation of the monsoon rains allowed the production of only one crop in some fields which generally yield two, and caused others to lie fallow for the whole year. It is however estimated that in Eastern Bengal the area of "current fallows" does not exceed an average of one per cent. of the total cultivated area.

Crop areas.

279. In permanently-settled districts, statistics of crop areas are still of necessity subject to a very wide margin of error, though sustained efforts have been made during the year to improve them. Omitting the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, for which no estimates were framed before the year under report, the total area under rice in the province may be taken as approximately 16,418,000 acres, or 371,000 acres more than in the previous year. The area under jute increased approximately from 26½ lakhs of acres to 30 lakhs of acres, the increase being due to the stimulus of high prices, combined with favourable weather at sowing time. The areas under rape and mustard, and under gram and other pulses, both showed considerable increases.

Irrigated areas.

208. In most years there is but little need of irrigation in this province, but the failure of the second-half of the monsoon in 1907 emphasised the necessity for improving water channels. Every available hill stream, *khal* and tank was utilised to the utmost for irrigating fields of transplanted winter rice, and where a fairly good supply

of water could be obtained, a normal crop was harvested. But in many tracts of high land there are no *khals* or tanks, and the fields either could not be planted at all, or yielded only a very poor crop. In spite of the fact that this province is generally celebrated for its abundant rainfall, improvement on a very large number of estates could be effected by the provision of *khals* which would conserve and distribute water and also serve to carry away rapidly the surplus in time of flood.

Outturn per acre and total produce.

281. The *boro* (dry-weather) and *aus* (rainy-season) rice crops of the year gave approximately normal outturns per acre, but as less than the normal area was cultivated, the total yields of these crops are estimated to have been 90 and 94 per cent. respectively of a normal harvest. As weather conditions made late transplantation impossible, the area under winter rice was also less than it would have been, had the rains continued till the usual time. The outturn per acre was also, for the same reason, somewhat below normal, and altogether the total winter rice harvest is estimated at only 86 per cent. of that of a normal year. On the basis of these figures, the total rice production of the province in 1907-1908 was 6,650,415 tons, or more than 355,000 tons in excess of the previous year.

Though the yield per acre of jute was, owing to unfavourable weather, considerably less than the normal, the area cropped was so much larger than usual that the total outturn is estimated to have been 7 per cent. in excess of the normal.

Condition of agricultural population.

282. The effect of the high prices of food-grains has been to raise the wages of agricultural labourers. It is doubtful whether they have ever been able in this province to obtain such high wages as during the jute season of 1907-1908. And the high rates paid for labour in connection with the harvesting and preparation of jute raised the rates obtainable by all other classes of labourers as well. The drop in the price of jute was a severe blow to cultivators, and the early close of the rains necessitated the grant of Government loans to raiyats in some parts of Mymensingh and other districts where the land is high and unirrigated. With these exceptions the year was not unfavourable for cultivators in this province, for they realised good prices (except in the case of jute) for fairly good harvests of all crops.

SECTION 3.—Forests.

[*See* Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Area of reserved forests.

283. The total area of the reserved forests under the direct control of the Department was 6,550 square miles as compared with 6,250 square miles at the close of the preceding year. The increase was due to the final reservation in the Chittagong, Jalpaiguri, Cachar, Kamrup and Sibsagar Divisions of the 300 square miles under settlement during the preceding year. Six areas remain, which have been under settlement since last year. During the year new settlement proceedings were taken up in the Buxa Division, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Goalpara Divisions, and in the latter case the settlement proceedings were submitted to Government.

Working plans.

284. No new working plans were sanctioned during the year. The compilation of the second working plan for the Goalpara *sâl* forests was completed, and the area to be covered by this plan was increased by 197 square miles. Preliminary working plan reports, embracing 326 square miles in the Kamrup, Nowgong and Khasi and Jaintia Hills Divisions, were sanctioned, and the compilation of the working plan, covering an area of 158 square miles in the Nowgong Division, is approaching completion.

In the Buxa Division the inadequate supply of rolling stock on the Eastern Bengal State Railway and the bad state of the Local Board road from Rajabhatkhowa to Alipur Duar continued to hamper the full exploitation of the forests. The lack of labour was also an obstacle in several places to the carrying out of the prescriptions of working plans.

Communications and buildings.

285. An addition of over a mile was made to the tramway in the Goalpara Division, bringing the total length at the close of the year to 11 miles and 50 chains. A scheme for the further extension of this tramway to a total length of 21 miles is under the consideration of Government.

In all 204 miles of new road were constructed at an average cost of Rs. 104 a mile.

The total outlay on road and building works was Rs. 1,15,756, as against Rs. 69,653 in the previous year. The increase is large, but no progress in the development of forest resources can be looked for unless suitable means of communication and buildings for the accommodation of the forest staff are provided.

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Protection.

286. There was an increase of 244 in the number of forest offences dealt with, as compared with the average of the previous three years. Of these, 191 cases were tried in court, and in 158 cases convictions were secured. The Divisional Forest Officer of Chittagong complains that the punishments inflicted by the courts for illicit *jhuming* were inadequate. Rupees 8,361 was paid as compensation by offenders who compounded their cases.

Thirty-one cases of injury by fire were undetected. The percentage of area successfully protected from fire was over 95, but the cost per square mile was slightly higher than in the previous year.

Rubber plantations.

287. The total cost of the Charduar rubber plantation for the year was Rs. 2,37,123. The offers for purchase of rubber received from Indian firms was so low that the output of rubber from this plantation was sent to England for sale, and had not been disposed of when the year closed. The experiment of sowing seeds of *ficus elastica* in the Lushai Hills met with ill-fortune, owing apparently to the seeds being rendered infertile by insect attacks, but the number of seed-beds prepared by the Lushai chief increased during the year. It was found that there are very few rubber trees left in these hills. The cost of tapping and harvesting in the Charduar plantation was excessive, being exactly double the cost involved in the Kulsi plantation. Arrangements have since been made to place both plantations under the same officer.

Forest villages.

288. Sixteen new forest villages were established during the year and two were closed. The total number of villages at the end of the year was 120. The settlers in some of the Jalpaiguri and Sylhet villages gave trouble, a fact which points to the necessity of paying stricter attention to the character and desirability of the settlers admitted.

General.

289. The gazetted officers of the Department reached their full sanctioned strength. The proposals for the reorganisation of the Imperial and Provincial Forest Services have been sanctioned since the close of the year, and it may be confidently expected that, with the increased staff, forest management will now be placed on a thoroughly sound footing. Considering the disadvantages under which the Department has hitherto laboured, it is satisfactory to note the advance made during the year, especially in the improvement of communications, which is one of the most important conditions of progress.

Financial results.

290. Information under this head is embodied in Chapter V—"Revenue and Finance."

SECTION 4.—Manufactures and Mines.

[*See* Report on Tea Culture in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part I; Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908.]

Tea-gardens.

291. The principal manufacture of the province is tea. At the close of the year there were 927 tea estates in the province, or three less than at the end of 1906.

Area under tea.

292. To the area under tea at the end of 1906 an area of 10,137 acres of new extensions was added during 1907, but 4,761 acres of old tea were abandoned. Of the 428,062 acres of tea remaining, only 410,492 acres, or 96 per cent., were actually plucked during the year. The largest amount of new planting was done in Sibsagar district, where also more old tea was abandoned than in any other district.

The new planting of 1907 exceeded that of the previous year by 61 per cent., while the abandonment of old cultivation decreased by 52 per cent., and the area plucked increased by 1 per cent. These facts are all indications of a revival of confidence among proprietors of tea estates.

The total area of land comprised within tea estates increased during the year by 1·6 per cent. to 1,359,920 acres, of which 31 per cent. is actually under tea.

Outturn.

293. According to the return received, the year's crop amounted to 212,722,358 pounds of black and 1,536,507 pounds of green tea, as against 204,606,692 and 2,449,967 pounds, respectively, in 1906. The total for 1907 was 3·5 per cent. over that of 1906, and probably constitutes a record for the districts now comprised in this province.

The increased outturn of 1907 over the preceding year was a little more than seven million pounds. Of this more than three millions came from the Surma Valley and nearly two millions each from the Duars and the Assam Valley. Darrang was the only district which produced less than in 1906, the deficiency amounting to a million pounds.

Tea-seed.

294. During the year 2,329 maunds of tea seed were exported from the Brahmaputra Valley and 1,315 maunds from the Surma Valley. There were no imports from other provinces.

Prices.

295. In order to ascertain the prices actually realised for the season's crop, it has been determined, on the representation of the Tea Association, to show for the Calcutta market the average prices realised at sales held during the twelve months ending 31st March and for the London market the average prices for the year ending 30th June. By this system the average prices realised for tea manufactured during the calendar year are embodied in the same report with the other statistics relating to that year.

The following figures have been furnished by the Indian Tea Association :—

Year.	Brahmaputra Valley.		Surma Valley.		Jalpaiguri.		Chittagong.	
	Number of packages.	Price per lb.	Number of packages.	Price per lb.	Number of packages.	Price per lb.	Number of packages.	Price per lb.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			London sales.					
From 1st April 1906 to 31st March 1907...	703,034	9·14*d.*	278,841	6·56*d.*	235,451	7·09*d.*	4,173	5·90*d.*
From 1st April 1907 to 31st March 1908...	696,601	8·79*d.*	271,360	7·23*d.*	201,094	7·49*d.*	6,057	7·29*d.*
			Calcutta sales.					
		As. p.		As. p.		As. p.		As. p.
From 1st April 1906 to 31st March 1907	158,652	6 9	259,178	4 5	185,546	5 7	12,645	4 4
From 1st April 1907 to 31st March 1908	181,463	7 6	273,039	6 3	180,794	6 10	8,789	6 3

The Surma Valley, Duars and Chittagong all obtained increased prices both in London and Calcutta, but the advance was most marked in Calcutta, where it amounted to 1 anna 10 pies, 1 anna 3 pies, and 1 anna 11 pies, respectively. This naturally had the effect of increasing the proportion of the total crop disposed of in Calcutta. In London sales the same three tea districts obtained average advances of ·67, ·40 and 1·36 pence per pound, respectively. The main cause of the increase was the large demand for dust and fannings for export to China and the East. All the commoner classes of tea shared in this general advance, but higher-class teas remained stationary or declined. The result is a great levelling up in prices of the various qualities. The Brahmaputra Valley obtained an advance of 9 pies per maund in Calcutta sales, but the great bulk of the tea from this valley is sold in London, where the average price was ·35 pence per pound less than during the preceding year.

Condition of tea industry.

296. On the whole, the year 1907 was one of prosperity. In all the tea districts of the province, except the Assam Valley, an increase in production was combined with a considerable advance in prices. The difficulty of obtaining a sufficient supply of labour is the one disquieting feature in the prospects of the industry. It is hoped that, with the improvement of communications and of the local conditions of life of the coolie and the removal of all unnecessary restrictions in regard to recruiting, this difficulty will be alleviated. The arrangements recently made by Government to facilitate the settlement of coolies on land close to tea estates should also be very beneficial, as providing a means of retaining labour which, being in conformity with the usages of the country, is sure to be popular with coolies. The retention of the existing labour force is all the more important because, with the development of industries in the Central Provinces and other recruiting areas, the difficulty of inducing new coolies to leave their homes is certain to increase.

Minerals.

297. During the year Messrs. Turner, Morrison & Co. were permitted to renew their license to prospect for coal, oil, gold and other minerals in an area of 4·18 square miles in the sadr *khas* tahsil of the Chittagong district. Many applications were received for prospecting licenses and mining leases in the Saffrai and Tiru Valleys, which are reputed to contain valuable coal mines. But as these lie without the limits of British territory, and as it is desirable that they should be opened out to exploitation under the approved rules, the Government of India have been requested to move back the Inner Line of the Sibsagar district and the Naga Hills district boundary, so as to include them within British territory.

Coal.

298. Five coal mines were worked during the year. All of them are owned by the Assam Railways and Trading Company, Limited, and lie in the district of Lakhimpur. The total quantity of mineral raised during the year was 295,695 tons, against 285,467 tons of the preceding year. The total value of the minerals at the mines was Rs. 14,04,551.

The Government receipts from royalty on coal increased from Rs. 41,107 in 1906-1907 to Rs. 42,845 in 1907-1908.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

Mineral oil.

299. The royalty on mineral oil decreased from Rs. 19,919 in 1906-1907 to Rs. 18,196 in 1907-1908, of which Rs. 17,908 and Rs. 280 were contributed by Lakhimpur and Sylhet, respectively, and the balance by Darrang. The petroleum operations were confined chiefly to Digboi in Lakhimpur, under the management of the Assam Oil Company, Limited. The total quantity of petroleum was 3,156,665 gallons, against 2,897,990 gallons in the preceding year. The value of the oil was Rs. 1,56,189.

Stone quarries.

300. The total amount of Government revenue from stone quarries amounted to Rs. 1,261, of which Rs. 805 came from the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the balance from Sylhet.

Limestone.

301. During the year 82,449 tons of limestone, of the value of Rs. 1,01,844, were quarried, of which 315 tons came from Lakhimpur, 82,099 tons from the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and 35 tons from Manipur.

SECTION 5.—Factories.

[*See* Report on the Working of the Indian Factories Act in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part I.]

Number of factories.

302. One hundred and eight factories were at work on the last day of the year, compared with 99 on the 31st December 1906. In Assam the Railway Workshop at Lumding was brought under the operation of the Act. In Eastern Bengal there was a net increase of eight factories. Fourteen new factories were brought under the operation of the Act, and six were removed from the list.

The 108 factories were made up as follows:—

Printing Presses	1
Railway Workshops	8
Jute Presses	86
Oil Mills	2
Saw Mills	9
Tinning Works	1
Potteries	1
Total	108

The average daily number of operatives employed was 18,547, including 582 children, compared with 18,002, including 709 children, in the previous year.

Inspections.

303. Of the factories liable to inspection 46 were inspected once, 41 twice, 13 thrice and 3 more than three times each. No visits were paid by Inspecting Officers to 11 factories, *viz.*, 1 in the Assam Valley districts and 10 in the Dacca Division. The Chief Inspector of Explosives inspected the Burma Oil Company's Oil-tinning Factory at Chittagong, and the Special Inspector of Factories inspected the Railway Workshop at Saidpur and the Jute Press of Babu H. K. Roy Chaudhuri at Tan Bazar, Dacca. All other inspections were made by Medical Officers or by District Magistrates or Subdivisional Officers.

As a rule the provisions of the Act were observed, and the suggestions of the inspecting officers were generally followed. In the case, however, of a Jute Press in the Dinajpur district, in regard to which the owners neglected to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, it was not until the close of the year that anything was done to improve the condition of the factory, and then only under pressure. In certain factories in Chandpur and Akhaura, in the district of Tippera, the defects noticed by the Inspecting Officer had not been remedied at the close of the year.

Sanitary arrangements.

304. Sanitary arrangements generally were good, but defects were noticed in the Railway Workshop at Pahartali, in the Chittagong district, and in three factories in Akhaura in the Tippera district. The water-supply of the Railway Workshop at Lumding in the district of Nowgong, and the drainage of the coolie lines of a Jute Press in Dinajpur were also found to be unsatisfactory. The attention of the Managers was in all cases drawn to defects. There was no overcrowding in any factory.

General health of the operatives.

305. The general health of the operatives was good. Statistics of mortality are not generally maintained, but 63 deaths were registered in Assam, all in the Lakhimpur district, against 39 in 1906. The death-rate of the factory population of this district was 36·6 per mille, which compares unfavourably with the death-rate of the province. Many operatives of the Saidpur Railway Workshop in the district of Rangpur suffered from malarial fever during the months of October, November and December.

Employment of women and children.

306. Women and children were employed on light labour. The percentage of children employed to the total number of operatives fell from 3·9 to 3·2. The instructions of the Government of India communicated in letter No. 644-653, dated the 26th January 1906, of the Home Department, regarding the employment of children in factories, were carried out in almost all factories in the province, and children were granted certificates under section 5 of the Act. No abuse in the matter of the employment of women and children came to notice.

Fencing of machinery and mill gearing.

307. The machinery in nearly all factories was securely fenced and well protected, the provisions of the law being observed. The Lumding Railway Workshop, which was brought under the operation of the Act during the year, had no fencing when the workshop was inspected.

Accidents.

308. Twenty-six accidents occurred during the year, of which one was fatal, and one serious, while 24 were of a minor character. The fatal accident occurred in August 1907 at the Mecklanadi Saw Mills in the Lakhimpur district, a coolie dying from rupture of the internal organs, incurred while endeavouring to lift a beam.

Prosecutions.

No prosecutions were instituted during the year.

SECTION 6.—Sea-borne Trade.

[*See* Report on the Maritime Trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Sea-borne trade.

309. There was a decrease of Rs. 138·52 lakhs, or 16·08 per cent., in the aggregate value of the sea-borne trade (Rs. 722·49 lakhs). The foreign trade increased by Rs. 4·15 lakhs, or ·9 per cent., and the coasting trade fell off by Rs. 142·68 lakhs, or 33 per cent. The main cause of the aggregate decrease was the shrinkage of the rice importations from Burma, which in the previous year, 1906-1907, had been abnormally large on account of the failure of the crops in Bengal. There was an increase in the foreign trade in spite of the disastrous fires of the 12th October and 24th December 1907, when the warehouses of the railway terminal jetties Nos. 1 and 3 were entirely burnt down. These fires destroyed large quantities of jute (some 40,000 bales), and also resulted in a diversion of traffic to Calcutta. But for this cause the total exports abroad from Chittagong would have shown a considerable increase over the previous year. Imports from outside India, which are still small, *viz.*, Rs. 52·41 lakhs, showed an increase in 1907-1908 of Rs. 14·52 lakhs, or 38·3 per cent.

The whole of the trade referred to is practically with the Port of Chittagong, the trade with the subordinate ports being nominal.

SECTION 7.—Foreign Trade—Imports.

[*See* Report on the Maritime Trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

310. The following table shows the value of the principal articles imported into Chittagong from foreign countries:—

	1906-1907. Rs.	1907-1908. Rs.
Railway materials	11,64,168	17,17,546
Iron	7,98,075	7,69,240
Cotton piece-goods	3,99,887	5,11,414
Tea chests	3,67,577	3,43,148
Salt	3,10,338	6,07,583
Tin	12,489	17,352
Machinery and mill work	1,00,191	1,77,711
Steel	2,15,788	6,12,000
Hardware and cutlery	77,970	72,778
Lead	64,582	1,10,649
Provisions	26,305	56,398
Wood and manufacture of wood	21,180	24
Liquors	12,963	23,274
Chemical and drugs	8,327	10,950
Apparel	7,709	4,527
Spices	5,548	3,021
Oils	3,125	3,274
Sugar	1,855	9,680
All other articles	1,90,911	1,91,244
Total merchandise	37,89,988	52,41,813
Treasure { Gold	28,195	68,452
Treasure { Silver	47,399	46,368
Total treasure	75,594	1,14,820
Grand total	38,65,582	53,56,633

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

Railway materials.

311. Railway materials still head the list of imports from abroad, comprising nearly one-third of all such imports. The quantities of railway materials for 1906-1907 were 32,293 cwt. and for 1907-1908 63,470 cwt. The increase was therefore even more than the values indicate.

Iron.

312. Iron, which comprises 14·7 per cent. of the total value of the foreign import trade, showed a small decrease of Rs. 0·28 lakhs, or 3·6 per cent. in value as compared with the previous year. The quantities of iron are given as 89,109 cwt. in 1906-1907 and 76,987 cwt. in 1907-1908. Thus the decrease was actually more than the figures of value shown.

Cotton piece-goods.

313. The direct trade in European cotton piece-goods has been gradually increasing during the last five years. It now comprises 9·7 per cent. of the total foreign imports. The value thereof rose from Rs. 3·99 lakhs in 1906-1907 to Rs. 5·11 lakhs, or by 27·8 per cent., in the year under report. The average price of cotton piece-goods in 1906-1907 was Rs. ·19 a yard and in 1907-1908 it was Rs. ·23. So that the increase in the trade was less than the figures of value indicate.

Tea chests.

314. The decrease of Rs. 24,429, or 6·6 per cent., in the value of the imports of tea chests is ascribed to the gradual development of the saw-mill industry in Assam.

Salt.

315. The total importations of salt rose by 21,886 tons, or 98·6 per cent., those from the United Kingdom increased by 7,665 tons, or 121·3 per cent., and those from Aden by 6,977 tons, or 72·29 per cent. Spanish salt, amounting to 9,874 tons, was for the first time imported during the year. There would have been still larger importations of salt but for the want of accommodation in the present Government salt golas at Chittagong. One vessel with 3,750 tons of salt from Hamburg had to be diverted to Calcutta. A scheme for new golas down the river is now before Government.

Tin.

316. There was an increase of Rs. 4,863, or 38·9 per cent., in the imports of tin, which is considerably used on tea gardens.

Machinery and mill works.

317. The imports of machinery and mill-works increased during 1907-1908 by Rs. 77,520, or 77·3 per cent., in value. A cotton mill was erected at Chittagong during the year.

Steel.

318. The imports of steel rose in value by Rs. 3·96 lakhs, or 183·6 per cent., over the value (Rs. 2·15 lakhs) of the previous year. This marked increase was chiefly due to larger imports of joists, pillars, girders, etc., for building, including bridges. The average price of steel in 1906-1907 was Rs. 13, and in 1907-1908 Rs. 10, per cwt.

Hardware and cutlery

319. These commodities form but 1·3 per cent. of the foreign import trade.

Provisions.

320. The imports of provisions showed an increase of Rs. 30,093, or 114·4 per cent., which was chiefly due to larger importations of condensed milk, bacon and ham, etc., direct, instead of *viâ* Calcutta.

Wood.

321. The considerable decrease of 99·8 per cent. was due to there having been an abnormal importation of timber from Sidney during the previous year.

Oils.

322. The imports of oil from foreign countries increased by Rs. 149, or 4·7 per cent., due chiefly to larger importations of lubricating oil.

Sugar.

323. Sugar from foreign countries showed an increase of Rs. 7,825, or 421·8 per cent. This was due to an importation of 999 cwt. of sugar (value Rs. 9,615) from Java.

Treasure.

324. Treasure showed an increase of Rs. 39,226 over the figures of the previous year. The importations were from the United Kingdom.

Import Trade of Chittagong.

325. There was an increase of nearly 10 lakhs in the value of imports to Chittagong from the United Kingdom, which fell short of the entire total by only 9 lakhs. Of other countries, Aden, Spain, Australia and Holland sent the largest imports.

SECTION 8.—Foreign Trade—Exports.

[*See* Report on the Maritime Trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Export trade.

326. The following table gives the value for the past two years of the products in the export trade of Chittagong. The export trade in rice and paddy abroad was practically stopped in the previous year by the failure of the crops in Bengal. A small export took place in 1907-1908, but this was very inconsiderable in comparison with

the imports of the product from Burma during the year under review. The value of the different articles exported was as follows:—

	1906-1907.	1907-1908.
	Rs.	Rs.
Jute (raw)	2,31,95,712	2,16,38,353
Tea	1,57,69,052	1,60,98,169
Hemp	48,465	96,600
Rice and paddy	1,340	53,871
All other articles of merchandise	7,975	60,029
Total	3,90,22,544	3,79,47,022

Jute.

327. The total value of jute (raw) exported from Chittagong to foreign countries showed a decrease of Rs. 15·57 lakhs, or 6·7 per cent. The decrease in quantity was from 1,658,000 cwt. in 1906-1907 to 1,501,000 cwt. in 1907-1908. As explained above, this appears to have been due mainly to the disastrous fires at the railway terminal jetties, but for which a considerable increase of the jute export trade might have been expected.

Tea.

328. Tea showed an increase in value of Rs. 3·29 lakhs, or 2·08 per cent. The figures of tea exports in weight were 42,924,643 lbs. for 1907-1908, against 42,041,609 lbs. in the previous year.

Rice and paddy.

329. There has usually been a considerable export trade of rice and paddy abroad from Chittagong, but this almost disappeared, owing to the recent failures of the crops in Bengal. It is doubtful how far this export trade will revive in the near future.

Export trade of Chittagong.

330. Of the export trade of Chittagong with foreign ports the principal shares were taken by the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany and France. The value of exports to the United Kingdom and to America were less than those of the previous year by 6 lakhs and 10 lakhs of rupees, respectively, chiefly owing to the disastrous jute fires at the railway terminal jetties.

SECTION 9.—Coasting Trade.

[*See* Report on the Maritime Trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908.]

Coasting Trade.

331. There was a decrease of Rs. 142·68 lakhs, or 33 per cent., in the aggregate coasting trade of Chittagong, due to the smaller importations of rice and paddy from Burma as already explained above. The importations were still very considerable. The amounts of rice and paddy imported from Burma to Chittagong during the last two years were 5,360,000 and 3,136,000 cwt., respectively.

Imports.

332. The total value of imports during the last two years was as follows:—

Ports.	1906-1907.	1907-1908.
	Rs.	Rs.
Bengal	32,32,289	20,17,301
Madras	78,428	2,20,778
Bombay	18,606	17,172
Burma	2,62,94,960	1,67,80,960
Ports within the province	94,919	1,60,655
Indian ports, not British	.....	3,567
Total	2,97,19,202	1,92,00,433

The decrease of Rs. 12·14 lakhs in the trade from Bengal was due to larger importations of goods by rail from Calcutta. The increase of Rs. 1·42 lakhs in the trade with Madras resulted from to larger importations of cocoanut oil, coir rope and cotton piece-goods. The decrease in the trade with Bombay was nominal.

Exports.

333. The total value of exports during the last two years was as follows:—

Ports.	1906-1907.	1907-1908.
	Rs.	Rs.
Bengal	47,23,983	36,70,047
Madras	81,576	1,950
Bombay	3,47,506	1,32,060
Burma	80,95,931	6,54,638
Ports within the province	66,756	3,739
Indian ports, not British	.....	.....
Total	1,33,15,752	94,62,434

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

The decrease in exports was due mainly to the fall of the rice trade from Burma, which necessitated smaller amounts of treasure being sent there for the purchase of the product. There was consequently a diminution in the shipments of rice from Chittagong to Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. As regards other ports within the province, Cox's Bazar and Nilla are ports for coasting trade only. Narayanganj, which was abolished as a port in May 1906, has since been declared a port for coasting trade only.

Treasure.

334. The value of the imports of treasure during the year was Rs. 28,000. The value of the exports amounted to Rs. 58,37,000, against Rs. 89,94,300 in the previous year.

SECTION 10.—Frontier Trade.

[*See* Report on the Trade between the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and the adjoining Foreign Tribes and Countries for the three years ending the 31st March 1908.]

System of registration.

335. The following changes were made in the system of trade registration during the triennium :—

(*a*) Since the beginning of the year 1905-1906 the trade by each route with each frontier country has been shown separately in the returns.

(*b*) Owing to the creation of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam the returns of trade with Bhutan registered at Buxa Duar, Hantupara and Ambari in the district of Jalpaiguri, which were formerly included in the Bengal returns, have been incorporated with the returns of Assam since the 1st April 1906.

(*c*) In accordance with the suggestions made by the Committee appointed to revise the system of Indian Trade Statistics, the registration of trade between this province and the States of Manipur and Hill Tippera has been discontinued since the 1st April 1907.

The system of registration in force is admittedly defective. The mauzadars and police officers, who do most of the work, are scarcely in a position to obtain information of all the trade that crosses the frontier. They receive no special remuneration for their trade registration work, and no inspecting staff is employed. Moreover, for some portions of the trans-frontier trade, *e.g.*, that with the Nagas on the eastern boundary of Sibsagar, no returns are received. Bulky imports are generally disposed of at fairs or other large centres of trade as soon as the hill people reach the plains; their registration consequently gives little difficulty. But in going away there is no special centre where the hill people assemble in such a way that particulars of the goods they are taking away can be ascertained. The result is that registration statistics show every year a great preponderance of the value of imports over that of exports. The fact is that there are so many trade routes crossing the frontiers of this province, and the total quantity of trade by each route is generally so small, that a complete and efficient system of registration would involve more expense than the value of the statistics obtained would justify. In defence of the present system it may be urged that the most important portions of the trans-frontier trade are registered, and that the cost is practically *nil*.

Value of imports and exports.

336. The total value of the trans-frontier trade was Rs. 7,68,487 in 1907-1908. Owing to the inclusion of three new trade routes to Bhutan from 1906-1907 and to the exclusion of trade with Manipur and Hill Tippera from 1907-1908, no useful comparison can be made between the totals of 1907-1908 or 1906-1907 and those of any previous year.

The proportion which the value of the trade with each country or tribe bore to the total trans-frontier trade of each year is shown in the following table :—

Countries.	1906-1907.	1907-1908.
	Rs.	Rs.
Bhutan	35·9	72·9
Towang and Charduar Bhutias	1·4	7·7
Aka and Dafla Hills	1·5	7·4
Abor, Mishmi, etc., Hills	4·7	12·0
Manipur	31·2	...
Hill Tippera	25·3	...
Total	100	100

The fluctuations in the returns of the export and import of the various articles in which trade is carried on with Bhutan and other countries are so violent as to be practically valueless. No explanations are forthcoming of these fluctuations, which can only be assigned to defective registration. For instance, as regards the imports of wax from Bhutan into Jalpaiguri and the imports into Assam, no reason is assigned why the values should have practically doubled since 1906.

Chief imports.

337. The chief imports from Bhutan are ponies, musk, wax, timber, blankets, oranges, ghee, piece-goods, yak-tails, caoutchouc and lac. The trade with Bhutan is almost exclusively confined to Jalpaiguri and Assam. Four fairs are held annually to facilitate trade between the Bhutias and the plains peoples, but the fairs at Alipur and Falakata do not appear to justify the Government grant which they receive, inasmuch as very few Bhutias attend them. From the Towang and Charduar Bhutias are exported ponies, blankets, caoutchouc and gold. The returns of the latter articles show a fall in value from Rs. 16,000 in 1906 to Rs. 220 in 1907, and as no explanation of the fluctuation can be given by the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, this must be taken as another instance of defective registration. From the Aka and Dafla tribes caoutchouc is pracatically the only commodity imported, while caoutchouc and timber are imported from the Abor, Mishmi, Naga and Khamti tribes.

Chief exports.

338. The principal exports from this province into Bhutan consist of piece-goods and yams, raw silk, tobacco, betel-nuts and spices, brass and copper, rice and ghee. Cotton cloth is the most important of the piece-goods, and six-sevenths of that taken by the Bhutias is European cloth. If the figures are to be believed, the value of the English cotton cloth exported from the Assam districts and Jalpaiguri into Bhutan rose from Rs. 40,005 in 1906 to Rs. 60,556 in 1907. The exports of brass and copper into Bhutan are steadily increasing.

The exports to other tribes are inconsiderable.

SECTION 11.—Rail and River-borne Trade.

[*See* Report on the Trade carried by Rail and River in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907-1908.]

Rail and River-borne trade.

339. The total value of the rail and river-borne trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam with other provinces during the year was 4,695 lakhs of rupees, of which 1,951 lakhs represents imports in the value of which there was an increase. Exports fell in value, though they rose in quantity, this fact being accounted for by the fall in the jute market.

The chief imports into the province were cotton piece-goods (555 lakhs), iron and steel (229 lakhs), rice (117 lakhs), paddy (100 lakhs), mustard and rape oil (97 lakhs) and cotton twist and yarn (92 lakhs). Besides these the imports of sugar and kerosine oil were also considerable. In the import of cotton piece-goods, and especially of Indian-made goods, there has been remarkable expansion, and the value of these imports increased during the year by over 100 lakhs. The most important exports were raw jute (1,596 lakhs), tea (541 lakhs), rice, paddy, hides and oil-seeds. It is remarkable that owing to the heavy fall in prices of jute in 1907-1908, though the quantity exported exceeded the exports of the previous year by some 6 lakhs of maunds, it was less in value by nearly 550 lakhs of rupees. In addition to the quantity of tea exported by rail and river some 537,000 maunds were exported by sea from Chittagong.

Direction of trade.

340. Calcutta monopolised an even larger share of the external trade of the province than in the previous year. Almost 82 per cent. of the exports and 87 per cent. of the imports went to or came from Calcutta. The rest of Bengal received 10 and sent 18 per cent., respectively, of our exports and imports, but with regard to trade with Bengal and with other provinces which is apparently insignificant in volume, it must be remembered that country boat traffic, except with Calcutta direct, is not recorded.

Proportion of River-borne to Rail-borne Trade.

341. This same fact considerably minimises the value of figures comparing river-borne with rail-borne trade. Of the recorded trade, 49 per cent. of the exports and 53 per cent. of the imports was carried by river only. The value of exports carried by river decreased by over Rs. 300 lakhs, but river-borne imports showed an increase of some 20 lakhs.

SECTION 12.—Public Works.

[*See* Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Eastern Bengal and Assam, for 1907-1908.]

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Revenue and expenditure.

342. The total Public Works revenue amounted to Rs. 1,70,103 and the total expenditure to Rs. 62,76,181, against Rs. 1,37,483 and Rs. 49,62,508, respectively, in the previous year.

IMPERIAL WORKS AND EXPENDITURE.

Military.

343. Certain improvements were made in the Native Infantry Lines at Shillong.

Civil.

344. The works commenced in the previous year in connection with the offices of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Barisal and the post offices at Shillong, Mymensingh and Rangpur were completed during the year under report. The extension of the Post Office at Dacca, the construction of combined Post and Telegraph Offices at Patiya and Bogra, and certain additions and alterations to two telegraph buildings were in progress.

The construction of a residence for the Accountant General at Dacca was commenced.

PROVINCIAL WORKS.

BUILDINGS.

Residence for Government officials.

345. Extensive repairs to Government House at Shillong were continued during the year. The estimate for the permanent Government House at Dacca was sanctioned by the Government of India, and work was commenced shortly before the close of the year. A small residence for the Lieutenant-Governor at Chittagong was also commenced at the end of the year.

Seventeen out of 33 projected residences in the new Civil Station of Dacca were under construction during the year, and one out of five contemplated residences on the Dacca Farm was started. Residences for the Deputy Commissioners at Shillong and Dhubri were completed during the year. Residences for the Superintendents of Police at Chittagong and Barisal, a Subdivisional residence at Netrokona, and a house for the Civil Surgeon at Noakhali were also completed; residences for the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division at Jalpaiguri and for the Executive Engineer at Chittagong were commenced, and three bungalows purchased by Government were repaired and improved to provide residences for certain officers at Chittagong, Barisal and Rajshahi. Ten residences for Munsifs in Eastern Bengal and one at Habiganj in the Sylhet district were under construction. Improvements were also carried out in the residence of the Political Agent at Manipur.

Land acquisition.

346. In addition to 762 acres of land acquired in 1906-1907 for the Civil Station of Dacca, 744 acres were acquired during the year at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,08,306, of which 139·6 acres are intended for clerks' quarters. Some land was also acquired at Barisal for official residences and for sites for offices.

Administration.

347. Materials to the value of Rs. 36,723 were collected for the purpose of new Secretariat Offices at Dacca. Additions and alterations were carried out in the existing Civil Secretariat buildings at Shillong as well as in the offices of the Inspector General of Police, the Commissioner of Excise, and the Director of Public Instruction. An office for the Superintendent of the Secretariat Press at Shillong, with confidential room in connection was completed and a building for the Dacca Jail Press, with a detached foundry, was also constructed. An office for the Commissoner, Surma Valley and Hill Districts, at Silchar, and a record-room for the Commissioner Assam Valley Districts, at Gauhati, were completed. Offices for six Sub-Deputy Collectors in Assam and two office buildings for mandals were completed. Two other offices for Sub-Deputy Collectors were in progress. Additions to the Collectorates at Mymensingh, Pabna and Dinajpur were nearly completed and a tahsil office was built at Falakata in the Jalpaiguri district.

Law and Justice.

348. The new cutcherry buildings at Jorhat were almost finished. Four rooms were added to the Deputy Magistrate's court at Noakhali. An extension was made to the Subdivisional Court House at Netrokona; and an Honorary Magistrate's court at Kurigram was built. The construction of a single Munsifi at Feni and the conversion of a single Munsifi into a double one at Gaibandha were carried out. An Honorary Magistrate's court at Sherpur and an extension of the Judge's court at Chittagong were in progress.

349. A new office for the Superintendent, Chittagong Hill Tracts, at Rangamati was under construction.

350. The construction of new circuit-houses was begun at Chittagong and Dinajpur, and one at Noakhali was well advanced at the close of the year, whilst two others, *viz.*, at Faridpur and Rangamati, were completed. Others, at Rajshahi, Bogra and Jalpaiguri, were enlarged and improved. Additions to the Barisal circuit house were commenced. Political, Circuit-House.

351. The Dacca College and subsidiary buildings and works were nearly completed. Improvements to the Rajshahi College compound approached completion, and a boarding-house for Muhammadans was commenced. Additions and alterations to the Zilla School at Comilla and Faridpur were in progress. The extension of the Hindu Hostel for the Malda Zilla School was commenced, and land was acquired for the extension of the Dacca Training College compound. Educational buildings.

In Assam, the High School buildings at Sunamganj and Nazira and the Middle English School buildings at North Lakhimpur and Kakojan (Sibsagar) were completed during the year. Improvements were made in the High School buildings at Sylhet, Silchar, Gauhati and Shillong. A technical school was constructed at Kohima and a school and hostel for the Cachari pupils at Chatguri (Darrang). The construction of a girls' school at Sylhet was in progress.

Hostels were constructed at Silchar, Jorhat and Dhubri; and additions and alterations were made in the Hindu Hostel attached to the Cotton College, Gauhati.

352. Two barracks, one in the Rajshahi and the other in the Chittagong Jail, a tuberculosis ward in the Dacca Lunatic Asylum, a female ward in the Nowgong Sub-jail, two solitary cells in the Dibrugarh Jail and certain minor works in some other jails were completed. Two A-class barracks in the Tezpur Jail, a male ward in the Shillong Jail, quarters for a hospital assistant in the Dacca Jail, improvements in the Barisal, Bogra, Mymensingh and Faridpur Jails, and in the Brahmanbaria Sub-jail were in progress. Jail.

353. New police buildings at Chhatak, Fenchuganj, Margherita and Sibsagar were completed, as also a barrack with a cook-shed at Nalbari, and a barrack at Jaipur, a well in the Nowgong Police Lines, civil police married quarters at Aijal and a ration godown at Lungleh. Police.

Police buildings were in progress at Kamalganj, Balaganj, Haflong, Ajmiri, Dibrugarh (Military Police), Sootia, Rangia, Gohpur and Barpeta. Re-arrangement and alterations were carried out in the Military Police Barrack at Lungleh. Quarters for sub-inspectors were under construction at Golaghat, North Lakhimpur, Dhakuakhana Jaipur, and Gohpur and quarters for an Inspector at North Lakhimpur. The provision of corrugated-iron roofs over the ruberoid roofs of the three police barracks at Golaghat was also in hand.

354. Land was acquired for the extension of the Dacca Medical School. Extensive improvements were in progress in connection with the Vaccine Depôt at Shillong. Two syphilitic wards for the Wokha and Mokokchang Dispensaries and experimental hospital wards at Henema and Tamlu in the Naga Hills were constructed. The construction of a fourth male ward in the Lunatic Asylum at Tezpur was commenced. Medical.

355. Extensive improvements were undertaken in the Central Distillery at Jorhat. Work on the spirit godown, *pucca* platform for the tank, and the *pucca* well at Tinsukia, quarters for the distillery staff at Golaghat, and some minor works in the Golaghat, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh Distilleries were carried out. The construction of staff quarters and of a well in the liquor depôt at Nazira was in progress. Excise.

356. A combined office for the Superintending Engineer, Eastern Bengal Circle, and the Executive Engineer, Dacca Division, and offices for the Executive Engineers at Rajshahi, Chittagong and Jalpaiguri were put in hand during the year. A bungalow at Kunjupkhul was purchased from the Manipur State as a sanitarium bungalow for officers stationed at Manipur. The transport lines at Aijal were reconstructed and the Public Works Department transport godown at Demagiri improved. P. W. D. Buildings.

357. A Registration office at Malda and the extension of the registration office at Rangpur were commenced. Registration.

358. The amount expended during the year on the conservation and special repair of archæological buildings was Rs. 59,752, Rs. 15,423 of this being at Gaur and Pandua. The restoration of the monolithic columns at Dimapur was completed and the wire-fencing round the area was in progress. Archæology.

359. The Dacca Farm buildings and a metalled approach road from the Mirpur road were completed. Materials were collected for the Farm Laboratory and one of the five proposed residences for experts was commenced. Miscellaneous.

Road-making, levelling and other improvements were in progress on the land acquired for the new Civil Station of Dacca.

At Chittagong an experimental well-boring was carried out under contract by Messrs. Kilburn & Co.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Expenditure.

360. On original works under Communications a sum of Rs. 8,18,742 was expended as noted below:—

	Rs.
(*a*) Bridges	1,06,067
(*b*) New cart-roads	1,45,921
(*c*) Bridle-roads	45,023
(*d*) Dâk and inspection bungalows	1,30,690
Total	4,27,701

The balance was spent on improvements to existing roads. The total expenditure is divided as follows:—

	Rs.
Assam Circle	75,046
Eastern Bengal Circle	6,60,479
Lushai Hills	83,217

Assam Trunk Road.

361. The raising and improving of the Lakhipur-Fakirganj section were almost completed. The replacing of the planked roadway of two bridges and providing two screw pile bridges in place of wooden ones were in progress, as also the replacing of corrugated-iron drain pipes by masonry drains and culverts in the Dibrugarh-Sadiya section.

North Trunk Road.

362. The work of extension on this road in the first 14 miles (section II) was in progess. A screw-pile bridge in the 12th mile west of Tezpur, which was in progress from the previous year, was nearly completed. A bridge in the 28th mile was dismantled and rebuilt, and the replacement of four bamboo bridges by screw-pile bridges was in hand.

Gauhati-Shillong Road.

363. Certain improvements which were commenced in the previous year were completed. The improvement of the curves and gradients on the Shillong section was in progress.

Shillong-Cherra Road.

364. The remetalling of the Cherra section was completed. The work of resectioning the road and consolidating the metal was in progress.

Manipur Road.

365. The work of metalling and improving the Manipur Road throughout was well advanced. The construction of retaining walls in certain places approached completion; and the metalling of the *kutcha* portions in the last 29 miles near Manipur was completed.

Other roads.

366. A portion of the Therria-Companyganj bridle road was diverted with a view to protect it from the floods of the Therria river. The survey of the Mawphlang-Bhawalgaon road was in progress, and that of Lohit-Salmara and Noa Alimu Salmara roads was started. The worst portions of the Kathiatoli-Amluki road were metalled. Improvements to the Lanka-Kharikhana road and roads in Kohima station were in progress. The Nowgong-Dehing road was nearly completed; and the extension of the Dessangmukh road was taken up. The metalling of the Kamarbanda-Ali and Barpeta-Ali roads from the new cutcherry to the new Civil station of Jorhat was commenced. Improvements to the Goramur, old Rajgarh-Ali and Jaipur roads were in progress. Considerable progress was also made in the Damurdah screw-pile bridge, and two other screw-pile bridges on the Dhubri-Kachugaon road were practically completed. The Chapar-Sidli and the Nalbari-Dhamdhama roads, which, when completed, will serve as feeders to the Gauhati extension of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, were in progress. The Tura-Rowmari Road was raised and improved. The Tizu Valley road (Naga Hills district) was practically completed and opened to traffic. The metalling of a portion of the Sylhet-Companyganj Road was completed. Works in connection with the widening of the Silchar-Hailakandi Road, the metalling of a portion of the Cachar-Manipur road, the diversion of the Manipur Road at the Chiri river encroachment and of the Cachar Trunk Road in the 36th mile and the construction of the Peterganj Road were in progress. The Tandoo Forest Road is expected to be open for traffic during the ensuing rains. Improvements to the Hilli-Balurghat Road

were proceeded with. The damage done to the Duars roads and Jaldacca bunds by the floods of 1906-1907 was made good. Work on the Aijal-Sairang road was resumed. A length of seven miles of the Aijal-Falam road was widened and some revetment walls and drains and seven inspection bungalows were constructed. A length of ten miles of the Lungleh-Demaguri bridle path was widened.

Bridges.

367. The construction of the Kullang bridge was postponed. The screw-pile bridge over the Tetelisora river was in progress. The bridge over the Dhansiri river approached completion. Seven permanent bridges on the Maulvi Bazar-Shamshernagar road were completed, as also a bridge over the Bhaga *khal* in the 28th mile of the East Hailákándi road. The Englai bridge in the 26th mile of this road was reconstructed. The work of replacing the timber bridges on the Burnimukh road by permanent structures was nearly completed. The reconstruction of a bridge in the 15th mile of the Silchar-Jhalnacherra road was also in progress.

Dak and Inspection Bungalows.

368. Dâk bungalows were commenced at Dacca, Narayanganj and Chittagong. The construction of new inspection bungalows at Salona, Chapanala, Chabua, Sakhabama, Arbela, Lumtui, Khawthlir, Kawlkul, Tinshen, Hnar, Neidawn and Champhai on the Aijal-Falam road, and those at Jabawk, Chinchip, Bukpui, Keitumkhawn, Chekawn and North Vanlaiphai on the Aijal North Vanlaiphai road and the reconstruction of those at Kathiatoli, Hoajan, Bokajan, Henema, Geleky, Bolpui and Kolosib on the Aijal-Dwarbund road were completed.

Three serais—one at Dhubri and two at Shillong—were under construction.

Maintenance of communications.

369. For the maintenance of communications, a sum of Rs. 5,76,738 was expended on the following classes of roads :—

	Miles.
Metalled roads	286·25
Unmetalled roads	1,762·24
Bridle roads	1,908·59

The above expenditure also included the maintenance of dâk and inspection bungalows and serais and the usual contribution of Rs. 30,000 paid by the Manipur State towards the up-keep of the Nichuguard-Manipur road. The expenditure in the Eastern Bengal area, where most of the roads are under the control of District Boards, was only Rs. 58,034.

Miscellaneous Public Improvements.

370. The following important miscellaneous works were completed or were in progress :—

(1) Improving the Gauhati water-works.
(2) Providing pumping plant for ditto.
(3) Remodelling ditto ditto.
(4) Improving site for new Jorhat Station.
(5) Experimental artesian boring at new Jorhat Station.
(6) Experimental tanks and wells and station improvements at Jorhat.

The deepening of an old tank at Dimapur was completed, and the renovation of a second tank nearly so.

A telephonic service was installed in Shillong during the year.

Minor Works and Navigation.

Irrigation.

371. The drainage of the Gaibandha *bhil* by cutting a channel 1·3 miles in length, which would also have the effect of lowering the level of the Ghagat river, was in progress. The dredging of the Buriganga river was continued by Messrs. Kilburn & Co. for nine months in the year. Its object was to improve the waterway at its junction with the Dhaleswari river and to deepen the shoals at and below the town of Dacca. A good channel was made up to Dacca, which lasted through the dry season. A sum of Rs. 13,000 was paid to the River Steamer Companies for removing snags, etc., in the Dibru-Sadiya channel of the Brahmaputra, and for bandalling at Dibrugarh.

Embankments.

372. A length of 120 miles of embankments in the Upper Assam Division was maintained during the year, and the raising of the Brahmaputra bund was in progress. The embankments in Eastern Bengal also received attention.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

CONTRIBUTION WORKS.

373. A cast-iron fountain was constructed at Bara Bazar, Shillong. The High School building at Habiganj, referred to in the previous year's report, was completed, and four masonry wells in Sylhet were nearly finished.

RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS.

2′ *Gauge.*

Jorhat State Railway.

374. The total direct capital outlay on the Jorhat State Railway line, including "Suspense" from the commencement of operations to the end of December 1907, amounted to Rs. 9,29,798, and, excluding "Suspense," to Rs. 8,94,650, which gives an average of Rs. 28,178 per mile open. The gross earnings for the year 1907 amounted to Rs. 91,667 and the working expenses to Rs. 91,144, resulting in a net earning of Rs. 523, against Rs. 12,995 in the previous year.

During the year under report, the question of introducing the through-booking system of goods and parcels traffic between this and the Assam-Bengal Railway was under consideration.

2′ 6″ *Gauge.*

Tezpur-Balipara Railway.

375. The total direct capital outlay on the line from the commencement of operations to the end of December 1907 amounted to Rs. 4,87,240, giving an average of Rs. 24,362 per mile. The gross earnings for the year 1907 amounted to Rs. 1,11,569, and the working expenses to Rs. 82,618, resulting in a net gain of Rs. 28,951, against Rs. 34,976 in the previous year. This line has proved a financial success, by paying an average of 5 per cent. on the capital expended.

The Borjuli Branch (2 miles in length) of the railway was closed during the year under report by the Tea Company owning the branch, and the General Manager of the Tezpur-Balipara Railway applied to Government for a license to work it.

Dwara-Therria Railway.

376. The Dwara-Therria Railway Company were unable to raise funds to complete the line and, after having spent nearly ten lakhs of rupees on the undertaking, the Company were compelled to take steps to wind up the concern.

3′ 3⅜″ *Gauge.*

Dibru-Sadiya Railway System.

377. The Dibru-Sadiya Railway system consists of—

(*a*) The Dibru-Sadiya Railway (proper) to Talup ...	...	77·50 miles.
(*b*) The Ledo and Tikak-Margherita Colliery Branch ...	...	8·50 „

Dibru-Sadiya Railway (proper).

378. The total capital outlay on the open line, including "Ferries," from the commencement of operations to the end of December 1907, was Rs. 86,37,748 and the outlay, excluding that head, Rs. 86,15,235, which gives an average of Rs. 1,11,164 per mile open. The gross earnings for the year 1907 amounted to Rs. 10,39,442 and the working expenses to Rs. 6,48,455, resulting in a net gain of Rs. 3,90,987, against Rs. 4,08,634 in the previous year.

An extension of the railway from Talup station to Saikhoaghat on the south bank of the Brahmaputra river, a distance of 8·52 miles, was sanctioned by the Railway Board at an estimated cost of Rs. 4,95,816 and construction work was in progress during the year.

Ledo and Tikak-Margherita Colliery Branch.

379. The total capital outlay on this branch from the commencement of operations to the end of December 1907 was Rs. 16,94,069, which gives an average of Rs. 1,99,302 per mile. The gross earnings of the line for the year 1907 amounted to Rs. 60,036 and the working expense to Rs. 37,274, resulting in a net earning of Rs. 22,762 against Rs. 25,052 in the previous year.

Assam-Bengal Railway.

380. The total open mileage of the line at the end of 1907 remained the same as in the previous year, *viz.*, 775·28 miles. Besides this, 35·32 miles were sanctioned for construction, of which 19·32 miles were actually in hand. The Akhaura-Ashuganj Branch of the Railway was nearly finished, and it is expected that it will be opened for public traffic in 1908-1909. Work on the Kulaura-Sylhet Branch of the Railway had not been commenced, but land acquisition operations on the portion from Kulaura to the Kusiyara river were nearly completed during the year.

3′ 3⅜″ Gauge.

381. The total open mileage of the main line and of the extensions during the year under review remained the same as in the previous year, *viz.*, 36·40 and 116·56 miles, respectively. Considerable improvements were reported to have been made during the year by the Railway Company in the management of the Teesta ferry at Jalpaiguri. Bengal Duars Railway.

Mixed Gauges.

382. A portion of the eastern section of the railway (5′ 6″ gauge) lies in this province; also the following metre-gauge portions of the line, *viz.*, the northern section (including branches) the Dacca-Mymensingh-Jagannathganj section, the Kaunia-Dhubri, the Gauhati extension and part of the new Katihar-Godagari line. The Teesta-Kurigram branch is on the 2′ 6″ gauge, and is 14·99 miles long. The metre-gauge sections lying in the province comprise an open mileage of nearly 620 miles. Nearly 36 miles of the Gauhati extension were open during the year. The remaining 112·93 miles and the Katihar-Godagari Railway, 105 miles, were still under construction, and are expected to be completed for public traffic in 1908-1909. Eastern Bengal State Railway.

Railways Projected.

383. During the year the report and proceedings of the Ganges bridge Committee were received from the Government of India, and the Local Government took the opportunity to urge that the construction of a bridge at or near Sara was eminently desirable in the interests of this province. The question of its site remained unsettled, and in consequence the consideration of certain railway projects in the Rajshahi Division had to remain in abeyance. Railways projected.

The report and estimate of the project for the Netrokona-Lengar Bazar Railway were received from the Eastern Bengal State Railway authorities, and the Local Government advocated the more direct route from Bara-Ari Hat station to Mohesh-khola as a through route, in preference to the loop route *viâ* Durgapur.

The following three projects were urged by Government, at a meeting held in Calcutta on the 27th December 1907, as being the most important in the interests of this province, *viz.*:—

(1) The Akhaura-Tangi Railway (in progress).

(2) The Jamalpur-Fulchari Railway.

(3) The Netrokona-Lengar Bazar Railway.

The estimate and report of the Rangiya-Tezpur Railway project were under preparation by the Eastern Bengal State Railway authorities, the surveys having been completed.

Railway Surveys.

384. The following surveys were sanctioned by the Railway Board and completed during the year under report:— Railway Surveys.

(*a*) In connection with the *Eastern Bengal State Railway*, the survey on the 3′ 3⅜″ gauge, from mile 85·8 of the Katihar-Godagari Railway near Nachoul *viâ* Rampur-Boalia to Abdulpur on the northern section. ... ... 50·5 miles.

(*b*) By the *Assam-Bengal Railway*, reconnaissance surveys on the 3′ 3⅜″ gauge—

(1) From Bhairab Bazar to Dacca, and, as an alternative route ... 44 „

(2) From Bhairab Bazar to Tangi ... ... 38 „

One of these lines is required to link up the Dacca-Mymensingh Railway with the Akhaura-Ashuganj branch of the Assam-Bengal Railway now under construction, and was strongly recommended by Government to the Railway Board as of first importance to the province. The necessity of linking up Shillong with Dacca by rail was also strongly urged.

By special request, the Railway Board sanctioned the survey of a railway line from Singhjani on the Mymensingh-Jagannathganj Railway through Dewanganj to the left bank of the Brahmaputra at a point opposite Fulchari. This line, it is calculated, will bring Dacca to within nearly 24 hours of Shillong, travelling *viâ* Fulchari, Kaunia and the Gauhati extension.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

A proposal for a survey for the extension of the Strand Road siding of the Assam-Bengal Railway at Chittagong in front of the salt golahs at Sadarghat and round through Buxi's Hat, so as to join the main line at the Chittagong station, was received and forwarded for the consideration of the Railway Board, who called for plans and estimates from the Agent, Assam-Bengal Railway.

Light Railways.

Light Railways.

385. During the year under report, Government had under consideration the question of the construction of certain light railways in the Assam and Surma Valleys.

The Railway Board were addressed on the question of funds to carry out reconnaissances or detailed surveys of certain selected light railway projects in Assam, but the matter was not disposed of before the close of the year.

Provincial Railways.

Provincial Railways.

386. There was a net gain in connection with the working of the Jorhat State Railway of Rs. 8,717.

ESTABLISHMENT.

387. The total charges for Public Works establishment amounted to Rs. 8,64,669. For the execution of Imperial Military and Civil Works, a charge of 23 per cent. on the cost of the works is made, the amount charged being Rs. 37,523, which is not included in the above. The cost of the Public Works establishment, *viz.*, Rs. 8,64,669, amounts to 21·31 per cent. on the outlay on works carried out by the Department.

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CHAPTER V.—REVENUE AND FINANCE.

(A) GROSS REVENUE.

388. The Receipts and Expenditure of this province during 1907-1908 were as follows:—

Receipts.

Heads of Account.	Imperial.	Provincial.	Local.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
A.—Principal Heads of Revenue—	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I—Land Revenue	96,98,883	1,04,75,831	...	2,01,74,714
II—Opium	6,90,437	...	...	6,90,437
III—Salt	14,63,247	...	...	14,63,247
IV—Stamps	48,19,439	48,19,440	...	96,38,879
V—Excise	33,94,289	33,94,290	...	67,88,579
VI—Provincial Rates	...	16,97,144	23,54,640	40,51,784
VII—Customs	94,115	...	...	94,115
VIII—Assessed Taxes	5,59,960	5,59,960	...	11,19,920
IX—Forest	7,15,223	7,15,224	...	14,30,447
X—Registration...	...	9,25,786	...	9,25,786
XI—Tributes from Native States	50,000	...	...	50,000
Total A.—Principal Heads of Revenue ...	2,14,85,593	2,25,87,675	23,54,640	4,64,27,908
B.—Interest—				
XII—Interest	50	76,142	5,087	81,279
D.—Receipts by Civil Departments—				
XVIA—Law and Justice (Courts)	...	3,61,477	...	3,61,477
XVIB— Ditto (Jails)	...	3,71,813	...	3,71,813
XVII—Police	...	1,85,293	2,96,212	4,81,505
XVIII—Ports and Pilotage	...	29,163	...	29,163
XIX—Education	...	2,22,907	85,552	3,08,459
XX—Medical	...	40,970	31,227	72,197
XXI—Scientific and other Minor Departments ...	...	7,395	48,768	56,163
Total D.—Receipts by Civil Departments ..	...	12,19,018	4,61,759	16,80,777
E.— Miscellaneous Civil Receipts—				
XXII—Receipts in aid of superannuation	69,241	9,335	...	78,576
XXIII—Stationery and Printing	4,187	21,773	1,025	26,985
XXV—Miscellaneous	11,826	2,37,438	51,555	3,00,819
Total E.—Miscellaneous	85,254	2,68,546	2,580	4,06,380

Heads of Accounts.	Imperial.	Provincial	Local.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
H.— Railways—				
XXVI—State Railways (Gross Receipts)	...	98,874	...	98,874
Deduct Working expenses	...	90,157	...	90,157
Net Railway Receipts	...	8,717	...	8,717
J.—Irrigation—				
XXX—Minor Works and Navigation	...	132	18,466	18,598
K—Other Public Works—				
XXXI—Civil Works	5,653	2,70,882	4,30,520	7,07,055
Military Receipts—				
XXXIV—Military Works	5,427	...	...	5,427
Adjusting Heads—				
Contribution between Provincial and Local ...	...	30,273	14,43,600	14,73,873
Transfers between Local and Local	...	...	954	954
Total Adjusting Heads	...	30,273	14,44,554	14,74,827
Grand Total	2,15,81,977	2,44,61,385	47,67,606	5,08,10,968

Expenditure.

Heads of Accounts.	Imperial.	Provincial.	Local.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5.
A.—Direct demand on the Revenue—	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1.—Refund and drawbacks	34,269	35,753	2,083	72,105
2.—Assignment and Compensation	59,974	30,566	...	90,540
3.—Land Revenue	9,24,406	30,52,463	...	39,76,869
5.—Salt	28,070	...	...	28,070
6.—Stamps	2,10,410	2,10,410	...	4,20,820
7.—Excise	1,14,087	1,14,087	...	2,28,174
8.—Provincial rates	...	25,767	88,646	1,14,413
9.—Customs	39,486	...	...	39,486
10.—Assessed Taxes	14,942	14,942	...	29,884
11.—Forest	4,00,186	4,00,187	...	8,00,373
12.—Registration	...	5,41,646	...	5,41,646
Total A.—Direct demand on the Revenue	18,25,830	44,25,821	90,729	63,42,380
B.—Interest—				
13.—Interest on ordinary debt	...	74,787	...	74,787
14.—Interest on other obligations	5,020	...	3,834	8,854
Total B.—Interest	5,020	74,787	3,834	83,641

Expenditure—concld.

Heads of Account.	Imperial.	Provincial.	Local.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
D.—Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments—				
18.—General Administration	1,79 531	11,59,048	1,43,222	14.81,804
19A.—Law and Justice (Courts of Law)	...	41,92,576	134	41,92,710
19B.—Law and Justice (Jails)	...	12,39,009	...	12,39,009
20.—Police	...	44,06 588	35,988	44,42,576
21.—Ports and Pilotage	...	1,86,941	14,073	2,01,014
22.—Education	...	14,21,173	13,64.38	27,85,561
23.—Ecclesiastical	28,268	...	...	28,268
24.—Medical	...	8,24,511	3,44,616	11,69,127
25.—Political	...	92,090	...	92,090
26.—Scientific, etc.	5,757	2,57,030	72,013	3,34,800
Total D.—Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments ...	2,13,559	1,37,78,966	19,74,434	1.59,66,959
E.—Miscellaneous—				
27.—Territorial and Political Pensions	7,843	...	...	7,843
28.—Civil Furlough and Absentee Allowances ...	...	45	...	45
29.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions ...	456	6,73,908	6,312	6,80,676
30.—Stationery and Printing	...	3,79,708	15,221	3,94,929
32.—Miscellaneous	30,615	2,33,743	34417	2,98,775
Total E.—Miscellaneous	38,914	12,87,401	55,950	13.82,268
F.—Famine Relief and Insurance—				
33.—Famine Relief	...	2,893	1,678	4,571
35.—Construction of Protective Irrigation Works ...	53	...	...	53
Total F.—Famine Relief, etc.	53	2,893	1,678	4,624
H.—Railway Revenue Accounts—				
41.—Miscellaneous Railway Expenditure	...	3,665	...	3,665
J.—Irrigation—				
43.—Minor Works and Navigation	...	70,993	72	71,065
K.—Other Public Works—				
44.—Construction of Railways	...	8,286	...	8,286
45.—Civil Works	1,68,033	58,05,136	25,45,327	85,18,496
Total K.—Other Public Works	1,68,033	58,13,422	25,45,327	85,26,782
Military Services—				
47.—Military Works	81,713	...	...	81,713
Adjusting Heads—				
Contribution between Provincial and Local	...	14,43,600	30,273	14,73,873
Transfer between Local and Local	...	...	954	954
Total Adjusting heads	...	14,43,600	31,227	14,74,827
Grand Total	23,33,122	2,69,01,551	47,03,251	3,39,37,924

Abstract of Receipts and Expenditure.

	1906-1907.			1907-1908.			1907-1908 compared with 1906-1907.			
	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Net receipts +, or net expenditure -.	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Net receipts +, or net expenditure -.	Increase of revenue.	Decrease of revenue.	Increase of expenditure.	Decrease of expenditure.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I—(a) Principal heads of Revenue.	4,45,94,352	56,82,006	+3,89,12,346	4,64,27,908	63,42,380	+4,00,85,528	18,33,556	...	6,60,374	...
II—Departmental heads—										
(b) Interest	46,730	42,514	+ 4,216	81,279	83,641	—2,362	34,549	...	41,127	...
(c) Post office	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
(d) Civil Departments ...	15,20,576	1,43,05,684	- 1,27,85,108	16,80,777	1,59,66,959	- 1,42,86,182	1,60,201	...	16,61,275	...
(e) Miscellaneous ...	4,52,372	11,45,962	—6,93,590	4,76,380	13,82,268	—9,75,888	...	45,992	2,36,306	...
(f) Famine Relief and Insurance.	...	1,06,103	—1,06,103	...	4,624	- 4,624	...	...	...	1,01,479
(h) Railway Revenue Accounts.	—2,306	8,763	—11,669	8,717	3,665	+5,052	11,023	...	...	5,098
(j) Irrigation	16,521	64,461	—47,940	16,598	71,065	—52,467	2,077	...	6,604	...
(k) Other Public Works ...	6,36,523	75,85,584	- 69,49,061	7,07,055	85,26,782	—78,19,727	70,532	...	9,41,198	...
(l) Military Services ...	5,943	69,686	—63,743	5,427	81,713	—76,286	...	516	12,027	...
Adjusting heads ...	13,95,257	13,95,257	...	14,74,827	14,74,827	...	79,570	...	79,570	...
Total Departmental Heads.	40,71,016	2,47,24,014	—2,06,52,998	43,83,060	2,75,95,544	—2,32,12,484	3,58,552	46,508	29,78,107	1,06,577
Grand Total ...	4,86,65,368	3,04,06,020	+1,82,59,348	5,08,10,968	3,39,37,924	+1,68,73,044	21,92,108	46,508	36,38,481	1,06,577

Land Revenue.

389. The expenditure of the year compares as follows with that of 1906-1907 :—

	Increase.
(1) Charges of District Administration	63,000
(2) Management of Government estates	39,000
(3) Commission on collections	60,000
(4) Survey and settlement	3,55,000
(5) Land Records	5,000
(6) Allowance to district and village officers	1,000

The excess under the first head was due to larger outlay on salaries of officers and grain compensation allowance to clerks and servants. The excess under the second head was due to the colonization operations in the Sunderbans. Under the third head the increase is counterbalanced by a corresponding increase in revenue, and was due to collection of arrear revenue by mauzadars in Assam, which necessitated the payment of a larger commission. Under "Survey and Settlement" the excess occurred on account of larger outlay on settlement operations in Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jalpaiguri and Mymensingh. The expenditure on provincial settlement operations of the year under review will, however, be reduced by the amount recoverable from private persons, on receipt of the apportionment statement from the Director of Land Records. The increase in "Land Records" occurred under "Kanungo establishment" in which the excesses were under "Salaries of mandals" and "Compensation for dearness of provisions." There has been a small saving under Superintendence.

General Administration.

390. The details by minor heads of the actuals and estimates under this head are shown below in round figures:—

Minor heads.	Actuals, 1906-1907.	Budget, 1907-1908.	Actuals, 1907-1908.	Difference with actuals, 1906-1907.	Difference with budget, 1907-1908.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Salary of the Lieutenant-Governor ...	1,00,000	96,000	96,000	— 4,000	...
Staff and household of ditto	44,000	52,000	45,000	+ 1,000	— 7,000
Expenditure from contract allowance ...	18,000	25,000	29,000	+ 11,000	+ 4,000
Tour expenses	5,000	2,000	7,000	+ 2,000	+ 5,000
Legislative Council	1,000	7,000	5,000	+ 4,000	— 2,000
Civil Secretariat	2,90,000	3,10,000	3,65,000	+ 75,000	+ 55,000
Board of Revenue	1,75,000	2,01,000	2,17,000	+ 42,000	+ 16,000
Commissioners	3,25,000	3,12,000	3,37,000	+ 12,000	+ 25,000
Civil Officers of Account and Audit, Imperial ...	1,71,000	1,90,000	1,80,000	+ 9,000	— 10,000
Ditto ditto Provincial...	21,000	16,000	29,000	+ 8,000	+ 13,000
Ditto ditto Local ...	3,000	23,000	6,000	+ 3,000	— 17,000
Inspectors General of Stamps, Registration and Excise, etc.	23,000	25,000	29,000	+ 6,000	+ 4,000
General establishment of Local Funds ...	1,30,000	1,34,000	1,37,000	+ 7,000	+ 3,000
Total	13,06,000	13,93,000	14,82,000	+ 1,76,000	+ 89,000

Compared with the actuals of 1906-1907 there were excesses under all the heads, the most important of which occurred under "Civil Secretariat" and "Board of Revenue." Under "Civil Secretariat" the excess was due, in addition to the causes which raised the actuals over the budget grants, to revision of establishments. Under Board of Revenue the excess was due to the purchase of a new steamer. The excesses under the other heads were due mostly to growth of work necessitating larger outlay on contingencies and to entertainment of additional establishments.

(B) IMPERIAL REVENUE AND FINANCE.

SECTION 1.—Land Revenue.

[*See* Report on the Land Revenue Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908 and appendices to the Resolution of Government thereon.]

Permanently-settled estates.

391. At the close of the year there were 116,781 permanently-settled estates in the province, with a revenue demand of Rs. 98,02,582. There was an increase of 90 estates, chiefly due to partitions, but a decrease of Rs. 9,737 in revenue, due to the transfer of estates from one class to another, to partitions under the old Act, and to abatements given for lands acquired for public purposes.

Temporarily-settled estates.

392. The number of estates settled temporarily in Eastern Bengal and the hill districts was 11,234. The number of estates in Eastern Bengal decreased by 11 and the revenue by Rs. 4,287. This was chiefly due to the transfer of some estates to another class and in the case of revenue to resettlement also. In the hill districts there was an increase of 592 in the number of estates and of Rs. 1,898 in revenue; caused by an increase in the settled area of the Garo Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts.

The total area settled for ordinary cultivation in Assam expanded from 2,591,531 to 2,670,453 acres and the revenue rose from Rs. 50,68,415 to Rs. 52,08,310. Large as was the increase in the previous year, the rate of expansion has been more than maintained in the year under report. The increase in area is the result of the extension of cultivation and occurred chiefly in the Assam Valley districts, among which Kamrup and Sibsagar contributed the largest share.

The large increase under the head "special settlement" (from 185,279 acres with a revenue of Rs. 92,589 in the previous year to 202,546 acres with a revenue of Rs. 1,11,405 in the year under report) is accounted for by the transfer of

areas from the head "ordinary cultivation" in the district of Sylhet. In the Nambor Forest in Sibsagar 178 colonists established themselves and took up 1,910 acres of land, of which up to the 30th June 1908 two hundred and eighty-eight acres were brought under cultivation.

The area settled with *ex*-tea-garden coolies increased from 124,072 to 131,171 acres, while that settled with other immigrants rose from 35,681 to 36,157 acres. This is partly due to the scarcity of waste land in Cachar, the lands in the deforested tracts having been already taken up.

Estates held direct by Government.

393. At the close of the year there were 1,554 estates in Eastern Bengal held direct by Government covering an area of 3,227 square miles, with a revenue of Rs. 22,34,093. These figures show a slight decrease in the number of estates, due to the transfer of some estates to another class and an increase in revenue, which is attributed to settlement and resettlement, as well as to the transfer of estates from other classes.

Demand and collections.

394. The total land revenue demand of the year was Rs. 1,96,90,159, *viz.*, Rs. 1,88,01,346 current and Rs. 8,88,813 arrears. The total collections amounted to Rs. 1,87,50,683 or 95·23 per cent. on the total demand, against 94·88 per cent. in the previous year. Out of the total demand, Rs. 8,65,562 remained uncollected at the close of the year, exclusive of Rs. 73,914 which was remitted. In the Assam Valley the remissions amounted to Rs. 31,243 and were granted mainly on account of the floods of 1906. Of the remissions of Rs. 31,519 in the Chittagong Division, over Rs. 6,000 was due to the reduction of fictitious demands in an estate taken over by Government.

Sources of Revenue other than land.

SECTION 2.—Customs.

[*See* Report on the Maritime Trade of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908; Statistics of British India, Part II.]

Revenue from Customs.

395. The following statement shows the gross and net customs duty (inclusive of the duty on imported salt) realized at Chittagong in each of the past three years. There was a decrease of Rs. 80,536 in the total amount of net duty as compared with the previous year. The duty on salt, which is the chief dutiable article dealt with, fell by Rs. 1,06,373. This decrease is due to the reduction of duty from Re. 1-8-0 to Re. 1 a maund from the 20th March 1907:—

	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.
1	2	3	4
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Import duty (excluding duty on salt) ...	36,001	55,203	80,137
Import duty on salt	9,95,704	9,63,746	8,57,373
Export duty	31,966	95	2,019
Total Gross Duty ...	10,63,671	10,19,044	9,39,529
Refund and Drawbacks.			
Imports	21	260	1,154
Exports	6,302	.....	127
Total	6,323	260	1,281
Total Net Duty ...	10,57,348	10,18,784	9,38,248

Receipts and charges.

396. As compared with the year 1906-1907, the customs receipts of the Port of Chittagong show a decrease of 7·2 per cent., falling from Rs. 10·49 lakhs to Rs. 9·73 lakhs. This was due to the reduction of the duty on salt. The import duty on goods other than salt increased by Rs. 24,934. This was chiefly due to large importations of cotton piece-goods, sugar, chemicals, drugs and liquors from foreign countries. The export duty showed an increase of Rs. 843, owing to a small revival of rice trade to countries abroad. There was a decrease of Rs. 3,527 in expenditure during the year, chiefly owing to less overtime fees being drawn by preventive officers, and to a diminution in the customs contingent charges.

397. There were five cases under the Sea Customs Act, against none in the previous year. A sum of Rs. 287 was realised as customs fines during the year under report for infringement of the rules of the Sea Customs Act. No cases were instituted under the Indian Mechandise Marks Act. Case under Sea Customs Act and Merchandise Marks Act.

398. Import bills of entry rose from 4,732 to 4,840, and shipping bills from 2,681 to 2,735.

SECTION 3.—Opium.

399. The cost price of opium sold in the Excise Department is credited to this head. The receipts on account of opium amounted to Rs. 6,90,437, against Rs. 6,44,656 in the preceding year.

SECTION 4. —Salt.

[*See* Report on the Administration of the Salt Department in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1907-1908; Statistics of British India, Part IV(*b*).]

400. As in the previous year, the preventive operations were controlled from Bengal. This arrangement has been continued for another year, *i.e.*, till the 31st March 1909. Proposals have been received from the Commissioner of Excise and Salt for the amalgamation of the Salt and Excise establishments. These are under the consideration of Government. Control of preventive operations will be transferred to this province as soon as orders are passed on these proposals. Administration.

No event of any administrative importance occurred during the year. The effect, however, of the reduction of duty which was made in March 1907 is seen in the receipts of the year.

401. The stocks in the *golas* at the commencement of the year were less than in the previous year, but the importations and clearances show an increase of 546,228 maunds and 97,973 maunds, respectively, as compared with the previous year. The increase in imports occurred exclusively in the quantity imported by sea for the public *golas*, which accounted for 595,796 maunds, or 98·6 per cent., while the imports into private *golas* declined by 49,568 maunds or 3·7 per cent. Stocks, imports and clearances.

402. The total imports by sea to Chittagong were nearly double those of the previous year. Imports from the United Kingdom increased by 208,648 maunds, or 121·3 per cent. and those from Aden by 189,922 maunds, or 72·3 per cent. The imports from Hamburg decreased by 71,555 maunds, or 42·2 per cent. This decrease is attributed to want of accommodation in the *golas*, on account of which a vessel with 3,750 tons, or 101,250 maunds, of Hamburg salt had to be sent to Calcutta. Spanish salt, amounting to 268,781 maunds, was for the first time imported to Chittagong during the year under report. Imports.

403. There was an increase of 107,680 maunds, or 5·4 per cent., in the sales of imported salt, but a decrease of Rs. 8,21,698, or 28·4 per cent., in duty realized, due chiefly to the reduction of duty from Re. 1-8 to Re. 1, with effect from the 22nd March 1907. Sales.

The decrease in sales from the *golas* in the Dacca Division is attributed mainly to the requirements of the Tippera district having been met by importation direct from Chittagong by rail, instead of, as before, from Narayanganj and Bhairab.

The decrease in sales in the Sirajganj *golas* is attributed to the fall in the prices of jute, while that in the Balaganj *gola*, which deals solely in Liverpool salt, is said to be due to the importation of Spanish and Karkatch salt by certain local merchants.

404. In the previous year 28 private warehouses were shown as open in the province owing to each licensed godown having been treated as a separate warehouse. But, taking all the godowns in charge of a Darogah as a warehouse, there were altogether 17 warehouses in the province in the years 1906-1907 and 1907-1908. Inland bonded warehouse.

Renewal of the license of one warehouse at Narayanganj was refused.

405. Duty-paid salt is conveyed for distribution to different districts by water or by rail. Accurate information is not available as to the quantity of such salt introduced by water from Calcutta. The quantity imported by rail amounted to 1,020,295 maunds and, with the exception of 10 maunds imported from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, was consigned entirely from Calcutta and other parts of Bengal. Inland transport of duty-paid salt.

406. As remarked in the previous year's report, correct figures of distribution and consumption cannot be furnished owing to the abolition of the Rowana system. The approximate total consumption, excluding duty-paid salt, introduced into the province Consumption.

by water, amounted to 3,092,960 maunds, as detailed below :—

	Mds.
(*a*) Duty-paid salt introduced by rail	1,020,295
(*b*) Non-duty-paid salt introduced into the province and sold from shipboard and bond.	2,072,665
	3,092,960

This gives an average consumption of 3 seers 14 chhataks throughout the province on the census figures of population 31,427,032 inclusive of the usual allowance of annual increase at the rate of 7 per mille.

Prices. 407. The average wholesale selling price per maund of salt, inclusive of duty, for the whole province was Rs. 2-4-11, against Rs. 2-11-5 in 1906-07 and Rs. 2-10-6 in 1905-06. It will be seen that the price has fallen in very few districts by the full amount of the reduction of the duty; but, on the whole, the consumer has benefited greatly. The poorer classes continued to use Panga salt and benefited by the reduction of duty.

Preventive measures in the saliferous districts. 408. As stated above, the preventive operations are still under the control of the Government of Bengal. There was no preventive force in Bakarganj. The Commissioner of Dacca reiterates his remark of the previous year that there is no reason to believe that illicit practices exist there.

In the districts of Chittagong and Noakhali there were no changes in the number and limits of circles and ranges. The block system of patrol of the saline tracts continued, and proved effective in keeping down offences against the Salt Laws.

In Noakhali the services of two special head constables were retained during the year under report to attend house-searches under section 18 of Salt Act, XII of 1882. Their services, however, were not once requisitioned, and the Collector recommends their withdrawal.

Offences, fines, forfeitures and rewards. 409. No case was instituted under Act XII of 1882. In one case, pending in the district of Noakhali from the previous year, and disposed of during the year under report, the accused was convicted, and Rs. 10 was awarded as a special reward.

The decrease in cases is attributed to the absence of crime owing to the cheapening of salt by the reduction of duty and the vigilance of the salt staff.

Receipts and charges. 410. The financial results of the administration of the Salt Department for the year under review, as compared with those of the preceding year, show a decrease of Rs. 8,20,917, or 28·1 per cent. in the receipts, but an increase of Rs. 5,277 or 22·1 per cent. in the charges, giving a net revenue of Rs. 20,70,499, which is less than that of the previous year by Rs. 8,26,194, or 28·8 per cent. The decrease in the receipts is due to the reduction in the rate of duty.

SECTION 5.—Excise.

[*See* Report on the Administration of the Excise Department in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908; Statistics of British India, Part IV(*b*).]

Administrative changes. 411. The chief administrative changes effected during the year were the raising of the duty on sophisticated spirits produced in India from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7 per gallon and the large reduction in the number of petty shops of all descriptions.

Financial results. 412. The total receipts under all heads amounted to Rs. 67,98,748 yielding an increase of Rs. 4,26,335 over the receipts of the preceding year. Over 97 per cent. of the total represents receipts under the three heads of country spirit, *ganja* and opium. Successful settlements in the Rajshahi and Assam Valley Divisions were responsible for an increase of nearly one lakh in the advance collections as compared with the previous year. In the Eastern Bengal districts country spirit and *ganja* accounted for 35·57 per cent. of the total receipts of the province and opium for 7·34 per cent. In Assam, on the other hand, opium alone represented over 34 per cent. of the total and country spirit and *ganja* 19·75 per cent.

The percentage of the current demand realised was 99·90. The proportion of expenditure to the current collections was only 3·63 per cent.

Settlements for 1908-1909. 413. The chief feature of the settlements for 1908-1909 was the large reduction in the number of shops licensed. In spite, however, of this reduction by 323 the new settlements show an increase of nearly two and-a-half lakhs on those of the previous year. The most noticeable increases occurred in the Rajshahi and Assam Valley Divisions, where competition was keen owing in the former case to the introduction of new bidders, and in the latter to healthy rivalry following upon the increased consumption of the past year. There is no doubt that petty shops usually represent

a fictitous demand and tend to encourage an indulgence in intoxicants among the people of the neighbourhood, and the results of the year vindicated the principle of abolishing them and so reducing the number of licensed premises, and of judiciously redistributing the remainder with due regard to local demand, as tending to produce a legitimate development of the Excise revenue.

Country spirit.

414. As before, three systems were in force, the central or sadr distillery system, the contract distillery system, and the outstill system. The effect of the introduction of the contract system into the Dibrugarh subdivision of the Lakhimpur district was prejudiced by the high prices bid for the shops, which resulted in a forcing up of retail prices and a consequent heavy loss to the vendors. None the less the revenue of the Dibrugarh subdivision showed a substantial increase. The total revenue receipts on account of country spirit for the year were Rs. 20,51,941, representing an increase of 9·27 per cent. on the receipts of the previous year.

Central distilleries.

415. The total revenue derived from license fees, duty and distillery fees showed an increase on the previous year of Rs. 23,327. The increase was entirely under license fees. There was a fall in consumption (and consequently in duty) which is attributed to the subsidence of the *swadeshi* movement, and to the fact that the people are returning to the use of foreign liquor. In Bakarganj eight petty shops were closed, but with this exception the number of retail licenses granted was the same as in the previous year.

Contract distilleries.

416. The contract distillery system was in force in the Sibsagar district and in the Dibrugarh subdivision of Lakhimpur. In the latter district two bonded warehouses were established. Altogether 48 retail shops were licensed, 17 of which are in the Dibrugarh subdivision. The total revenue realised under this system amounted to Rs. 4,55,070. The consumption in the Sibsagar district rose by rather over 2,000 L. P. gallons. The total consumption of distillery liquor in both districts was 90,649 L. P. gallons. The resources of the Jorhat distillery were severely taxed by the doubling of the area of supply and the necessity of accumulating a stock for the supply of the remaining plains districts of Assam, to which the contract system has been extended from 1st April 1908. The cost price paid to the contractors was raised from Rs. 1-9 to Rs. 1-14 per L. P. gallon, the rate of duty remaining unchanged. The total expenditure on the distillery during the year was Rs. 37,669, but the sum realised on account of distillery fees and water cess in lieu of rent was Rs. 11,757, or more than double the amount realised in the previous year. In Sibsagar very few cases of nuisance caused by drunkenness were reported during the year. As a result of the increase in the cost price and of the extension of the area of supply, the contractors are now making a fair profit. Considerable progress was made during the year in improving and adding to the Jorhat distillery.

Outstills.

417. There was a slight fall in the number of outstills licensed at the close of the year, the number now being 499. The decrease of over one lakh in the revenue derived from outstills was due to the extension of the contract supply system to the Dibrugarh subdivision. The settlements for 1908-1909 were on the whole very successful. There was an increase of revenue shown in the returns of all divisions except the Surma Valley where the decrease was considerable.

Foreign liquor.

418. The sale of foreign liquor showed a slight increase, but exclusive of steamers, railway refreshment rooms and dâk bungalows, only 143 licenses were in force during the year. It is impossible to give representative figures for consumption, as statistics are not available of imports by private persons and clubs. The only district which showed a markedly increased consumption was Mymensingh. The quantity of methylated spirit sold decreased by nearly 950 gallons owing apparently to the use of kerosine oil in hot air fans.

Tari.

419. The number of licenses issued for the sale of *tari*, fermented and unfermented, decreased by 128 on account of the stoppage of the practice of issuing licenses to persons who tapped trees for the manufacture of date *gur*. There was, however, a considerable rise in the revenue derived from this source.

Pachwai

420. The revenue derived from *pachwai* on the other hand fell off by over Rs. 550, though the number of licenses granted for retail sale and for home-brewing exceeded that of the previous year by 402. The high price of rice still accounts for the small output of this spirit, at least in Eastern Bengal.

Ganja.

421The p olicy of gradually reducing the number of petty retail *ganja* shops was inaugurated, and though the receipts for license fees naturally decreased, the revenue rose by Rs. 49,000. There was increased consumption in most districts which

must be attributed mainly to rise in prospects of the masses, and in part to a fall in retail prices. Though stringent inquiries were made into the desirability of applicants for licenses for the cultivation of *ganja*, the area under cultivation slightly increased during the year. But owing to the last crop being a bumper one the output increased very considerably, the average outturn per *bigha* exceeding the previous year's outturn by as much as one maund, and there was consequently a marked increase in the quantity stored in the public *golas*.

The manufacture of the drug has been brought under far more effective supervision by greatly decreasing the number of *chatars* and increasing the staff of temporary Sub-Inspectors so as to have one officer in charge of each *chatar*.

With the advent of the new crop the wholesale price dropped suddenly from Rs. 300 to Rs. 40 a maund. Though there was at the close of the year a sufficiency of *ganja* in the public *golas* to last out till the next crop, this extraordinary fluctuation in price points to the necessity of increasing the area under cultivation in order to steady the market and ensure an adequate stock.

Inquiries show that though the habit of *garja*-smoking prevails to a considerable extent among the immigrant tea-garden labourers in the Surma Valley, there appears to be no danger of its spreading to other classes.

Bhang, Majum and Charas.

422. The receipts from license fees for the sale of these drugs were stationary. There was an increase of nearly 10 maunds in the consumption of *bhang*, but as the drug is usually imported and duty prepaid, there was no increase in revenue. Two licenses for the sale of *majum* and five for *charas* were in force during the year, as against three and four respectively in the previous year. The receipts from license fees for both these drugs average Rs. 1,800 per annum.

Opium.

423. Despite a very considerable reduction in the number of retail shops there was a further increase in the consumption of opium and in the revenue derived therefrom sale. The increase in consumption was spread over all divisions but was most marked in the Assam Valley, where the consumption exceeded that of the previous year by 128½ maunds, which is only 10 maunds short of the total increase for the province.

The total receipts from this source amounted to Rs. 28,36,521 and exceeded those of the previous year by over two lakhs. In the Assam Valley Division the number of shops settled decreased by no less than 95, yet the receipts from license fees in that division showed an increase of over Rs. 56,000. Most of this increase is accounted for by the Lakhimpur district, where keen competition at the auctions, resulting in part from the reduction in the number of shops, produced an extraordinary rise.

The causes which led to increased consumption of opium are the same as those which have led to expansion of ordinary cultivation amongst Assamese raiyats. Among them may be enumerated the satisfactory natural growth of the Assamese population, their recovery from the effects of malarial fever, from *kála-azár*, earthquake and floods, a succession of years of agricultural prosperity and good public health, and the influx and circulation of cash, particularly among the labouring classes and hill and forest tribes, in consequence of railway construction and activity in the lac trade. Inquiries have shown that there is no cause for anxiety as to the spread of the opium habit among tea-garden coolies: it appears that the increased consumption is chiefly amongst to the less civilised indigenous tribes living on the slopes or at the foot of the hills in the north and south of the Assam Valley. At the same time further progress was made during the year in the removal of shops from the vicinity of tea gardens.

Cocaine.

424. Sixty-nine licenses for the sale and possession of cocaine were granted to *bonâ-fide* and respectable druggists after careful inquiry and reference to the Civil Surgeons of the districts. No case of the abuse of the drug as an intoxicant was reported.

Offences against Excise and Opium laws.

425. The number of persons tried for offences against the Excise and Opium laws fell from 713 in 1906-1907 to 650. Fines imposed amounted to Rs. 15,685, and there was a considerable increase in the number of persons sentenced to imprisonment. Of the fines imposed 67 per cent. were distributed as rewards and in addition Rs. 2,025 as special rewards.

The detection of some cases of smuggling in Tippera showed that a systematic smuggling trade is carried on with Rampur, a native state in the United Provinces, and steps have been taken in conjunction with the Government of the United Provinces to put a stop to the trade.

426. The revenue derived from Excise in the hill districts is small, and the statistics for the year under report both of these districts and of the plains districts have for the first time been presented in a consolidated report for the province. The only subject which calls for separate notice is the control of the arrangements for the manufacture and sale of country spirits in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The question is one of considerable difficulty; as in the semi-independent Khasi States, with which British territory is interlaced, manufacture has in the past been unrestricted, and it is doubtful how far effective measures of control can be introduced. In the immediate neighbourhood of Shillong it is hoped that with the co-operation of the Siem of Mylliem, which has been promised, the excessive drunkenness, which is now a subject of complaint, may be diminished by a reduction in the number of stills, the imposition of a still-tax, and, if necessary, the entertainment of a small preventive force. In the vicinity of the subdivisional town of Jowai it has been proposed to reduce the number of stills and to license each still. Excise in the Hill Districts.

SECTION 6.—Stamps.

[*See* Report on the Administration of the Stamp Department in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the three years ending the 31st March 1908; Statistics of British India, Part IV(*b*).]

427. The net revenue collections under the Stamp and Court-fees Acts amounted to Rs. 93,85,251, an increase of Rs. 6,71,671 on the previous year. The revenue derived from both judicial and non-judicial stamps shows a steady increase. The charges increased by Rs. 8,000, owing to larger sums having been paid as discount to vendors on the increased sale of stamps. The cost of stamps and plain paper supplied from the Central Depôt amounted to Rs. 2,06,012, against Rs. 1,76,239 in the previous year. Stamp Revenue.

428. The sale proceeds of court-fee stamps, excluding stamps for copies, rose from Rs. 60,10,582 to Rs. 64,26,308. The increase is attributed generally to increased litigation, and in particular to a larger number of suits of high value and to the payment of heavy probate duties in respect of some estates. In the Bakargánj and Faridpur districts, the Survey and Settlement operations were a contributory cause. Judicial stamps.

429. The total receipts from non-judicial stamps amounted to Rs. 26,57,754 and exceeded those of the previous year by Rs. 2,21,000. The increase occurred under all classes of stamps except *hundis*, or inland bills of exchange, and share transfer stamps. The revenue from the sale of impressed stamps exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 1,13,000. Among the many causes contributing to this increase of revenue srom the sale of non-judicial stamps are growth of population, high prices, growth of trade and business and increased demand for land, and a very great increase in the number of leases and *kabuliyats* executed in many districts, probably in anticipation of settlement proceedings. To these must be added the increase in the number of registration offices and the consequent increase of all classes of registration. Non-Judicial stamps.

430. The number of vendors (3,496) increased by 59, and the discount paid to vendors showed an increase of over Rs. 10,000. Stamp vendors.

431. The total number of cases dealt with by Civil Courts increased from 1,202 to 1,446 and the duty and penalty realised by the courts showed an increase of Rs. 1,094. The number of cases decided by Revenue Officers rose by 133, but the duty and penalty realised by them decreased by Rs. 1,908. Punitive action of Courts and Revenue officers.

Sixty-two cases were instituted for infringement of the provisions of the Stamp Act, a marked decrease on the number of the previous year. There was a corresponding decrease of more than half in the amount of fines realised.

SECTION 7.—Income-tax.

[*See* Report on the Working of the Income-tax Act, II of 1886, in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the three years ending the 31st March 1908; Statistics of British India, Part IV(*b*).]

432. Seven assessors were employed in the Eastern Bengal districts, while in Assam the ordinary district staff was utilized. Since the close of the year, however, the system of assessment in Assam has been modified. An assessor on Rs. 100 per mensem has been sanctioned for the Surma Valley experimentally for two years. For the Assam Valley two Sub-Deputy Collectors have been added to the regular staff, whose principal duty will be the revision of income-tax assessment lists. Assessment.

433. The net revenue derived from income-tax rose from Rs. 9,95,545 to Rs. 10,90,496, and the number of assessees showed an increase of nearly 1,000. The results were due partly to careful revision of assessment, and partly to larger profits Revenue derived from Income-tax.

earned by jute merchants in the Dacca Division, and by rice dealers in the Chittagong Division, where a brisk trade in Burma rice was developed.

The percentage of assessees with incomes of less than Rs. 2,000 a year was 67·7, but the amount paid by them was only 28·6 per cent. of the total receipts. The percentage of objections to assessments for the whole province was 8·6, and 234 persons were exempted on revision.

Distribution under heads of Income.

434. The following table shows the distribution of the tax under the several heads of income :—

Part I. Salaries, pensions, annuities and gratuities.	Part II. Profits of Companies.	Part III. Interest on securities.	Part IV. Others.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
3,39,659	23,483	6,486	7,33,586	11,03,214

The percentage of the tax collected under each part on the total collection of tax during the year 1907-08 was as follows :—

Part I.—Salaries, etc.	30·8
„ II.—Profits of Companies	2·2
„ III.—Interest on securities	·5
„ IV.—Other sources	66·5

Collections.

435. The total collections, including arrears and penalties, fines and excess collections, amounted to Rs. 11,20,320, and exceeded the collections of the previous year by nearly one lakh. The year closed with an unrealized balance of Rs. 14,046.

Fines and penalties.

436. Rupees 4,607 were collected as penalties and fines, as compared with Rs. 3,528 in the previous year.

Expenditure.

437. The total expenditure incurred in the assessment and collection of the tax was Rs. 29,824, which exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 1,000 approximately.

SECTION 8.—Forest Revenue.

[*See* Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

Financial results.

438. The forest revenue for the year was Rs. 13,87,240, and the expenditure Rs. 8,19,945. There was an advance under both heads, and the revenue of the year exceeded that of the previous year by Rs. 77,760. The increase of Rs. 1,09,211 in expenditure was due to several causes, of which the principal were a larger outlay on buildings, roads and bridges, the purchase of 7½ miles of tramway line in Goalpara, and the increase of the gazetted staff to the full sanctioned strength. The percentage of surplus to gross income fell by 5 per cent., as compared with the previous year. Every division worked at a profit except Darrang where the gross revenue showed a decrease of Rs. 25,000. Of this sum, Rs. 15,000 is accounted for by the fact that the rubber from Charduar plantation was sent to England for sale, and the receipts were not credited during the year. The system of sales to purchasers, subject to the prescriptions of the working-plans, in place of exploitation by direct departmental agency, (the system generally in vogue), has proved very successful in the Jalpaiguri Division, but owing to a lack of sufficient enterprise or demand on the part of purchasers the system has not yet been extended to other divisions. The system has the additional advantage of preventing in the extraction of sleepers, considerable waste of material in conversion, for the waste arises from the utilisation of badly-shaped and defective trees, which would be left untouched in the forests under the method of selection by purchasers. Proposals assimilating the duties on imported forest produce with the local rates are now before Government for approval.

(C) REVENUE AND FINANCE OTHER THAN IMPERIAL.

SECTION 9.—Provincial Finance.

439. The receipts and expenditure during 1907-1908 are compared below with those of the previous year. Receipts and Expenditure.

Year.	Opening balance.	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Closing balance.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1906-1907	62,00,000	2,35,38,164	2,35,88,140	61,50,024
1907-1908	61,50,024	2,44,61,385	2,69,01,551	37,09,858

440 A provisional financial settlement was made with the province for three years with effect from 1906-1907, a short term being adopted as several departments of Government were in the course of formation and development. The accounts of the new settlement started with an opening balance of Rs. 62,00,000, of which Rs. 12,00,000 was fixed as the minimum provincial balance. Of the balance available for expenditure, Rs. 50,000 only was spent in 1906-1907, and the accounts for the year 1907-1908 opened with a balance of Rs. 61,50,000, which exceeded the budget estimate by Rs. 1,13,000. The budget estimate for receipts for the year was Rs. 2,39,76,000, but, although actual receipts showed an increase of Rs. 4,85,000 over this estimate, the absorption of the opening balance amounted to Rs. 24,40,000, as against the budget estimate of Rs. 15,05,000, owing to the actuals of expenditure exceeding the estimates by over 14 lakhs. Financial settlement.

441. Nearly one-half of this large excess on the expenditure side was due to the high prices of food-grains, as the high rate at which prices have ruled necessitated, contrary to expectation, the payment of grain compensation allowance at maximum rates in nearly every month of the year. The expenditure under this head was further increased by the extension of concessions embracing a large number of persons and by lowering the minimum rate of prices which should justify the grant of the allowance. High prices were also accountable for an excess of roughly two lakhs under jails, as dietary charges proved much heavier than was anticipated. Taking grain compensation allowances and dietary charges together, the budget under these heads alone has been exceeded by more than five and a quarter lakhs. Apart from this special cause, which affected nearly every major head, expenditure increased also under Land Revenue (Rs. 1,06,000), Stamps (Rs. 17,000), Registration (Rs. 59,000), Interest (Rs. 17,000), General Administration (Rs. 1,13,000), Courts of Law (Rs. 2,46,000), Police (Rs. 1,36,000,) Ports and Pilotage (Rs. 53,000), Education (Rs. 1,71,000), Stationery and Printing (Rs. 58,000), Miscellaneous (Rs. 54,000) and Civil Works (Rs. 2,43,000). The head under which the budget provision was most markedly exceeded is Public Works, but substantial headway was made not only on new buildings at headquarters but also in carrying out ordinary provincial works. Causes of excess in expenditure.

442. The increase in revenue occurred chiefly under Land Revenue (Rs. 1,14,000), Stamps (Rs. 1,94,000), Excise (Rs. 94,000), Assessed taxes (Rs. 35,000), Registration (Rs. 86,000), Courts of Law (Rs. 21,000), Police (Rs. 61,000) and Civil Works (Rs. 7,000). The causes of the abnormal expansion of revenue derived from stamps are not clear, but as since 1906 receipts from the sale of non-judicial stamps have increased with much greater rapidity than receipts from the sale of judicial stamps, it is probable that high prices are at least a contributory cause, sales and mortgages tending to increase in times of scarcity. This would also account to some extent for the increase under Registration, but most probably the reorganisation and expansion of the Department are partly accountable for the increase. Decreases occurred under Provincial Rates (Rs. 28,000), Jails (Rs. 48,000), Medical (Rs. 23,000) and Miscellaneous. The decrease under Medical was entirely due to short receipts from the sale of quinine, while the sales of jail manufactures did not realize expectations. Increase in revenue.

The improvement in revenue was, apart from special causes affecting particular heads, due to normal expansion. The high price of food-grains, which necessitated the grant of grain compensation allowance to clerks and servants drawing pay not exceeding Rs. 30 per mensem, accounts for the excess expenditure over budget grants under most heads. Apart from this special cause, in certain cases the administrative necessities of the province have caused the budget to be exceeded.

SECTION 10.—Local Funds.

Receipts and chrages.

443. The following statement shows the receipts and charges of Local Funds in the province, including debt transactions, during the year 1907-1908 :—

Names of the Funds.	Receipts. Rs.	Expenditure. Rs.
Incorporated Local Funds—		
District Funds	43,54,872	43,92,560
District Road Account Fund	23,040	18,049
Local Boards Funds	14,52,937	15,42,695
Inland Labour Transport Fund	46,666	45,160
District Chaukidari Reward Fund	28,255	24,163
Total	59,05,770	60,22,627
Excluded Local Funds—		
Municipal Union and Station Funds	9,64,538	9,56,960
Town and Bazar Funds	39,850	37,614
Pilgrim Lodging House Funds	2,285	2,835
Chittagong General Hospital Funds	14,289	18,042
Hospital Port Dues Funds	6,593	6,234
Cantonment Funds	13,620	13,732
Assam Williamson Education Fund	3,921	1,794
Mohsin Fund	50,046	50,046
Port Trust	9,23,892	11,34,931
Total	20,19,034	22,22,188
Total Local Funds	79,54,804	82,44,815

Incorporated Local Funds.

444. In the budget, excluding debt transactions, a deficit of Rs. 86,000 was estimated, but the actuals showed a surplus of Rs. 64,000. This was chiefly due to the Public Works expenditure of Local Boards in Assam showing a saving of Rs. 1,44,000 out of a budget grant of Rs. 8,54,000. The civil receipts of the Funds showed a better realisation of Rs. 69,000 over the estimates, while the civil expenditure showed a saving of Rs. 36,000. The improvements in receipts were chiefly under Provincial Rates (Rs. 30,000) on account of realisation of arrears of Local Rates in Assam, under Education (Rs. 34,000) on account of realisation of a larger amount in school fees and contributions from private persons by the District Boards in Eastern Bengal, under Civil Works (Rs. 43,000) mainly on account of realisation of a larger amount of ferry revenue by Local Boards and receipt of larger contributions by District Boards from private persons and Municipalities. There were smaller receipts under Miscellaneous (Rs. 20,000) mainly on account of a fall in the bazar rents of Local Boards, and under contributions from Provincial Revenues (Rs. 20,000) on account of the Postal Service of those Boards having been taken up by the Imperial Post Office. Savings in expenditure occurred under all the heads, the most important of which (Rs. 40,000) appeared under Civil Works of District Funds. Educational expenditure exceeded the budget grant by Rs. 64,000 on account of a larger outlay by District Boards on grants-in-aid.

Certain Incorporated Local Funds, *viz.*, District Funds, Local Boards and District Chaukidari Rewards Fund have been made Excluded Local Funds with effect from 1908-1909, and their transactions will not find a place in the General Revenue and Expenditure accounts of Government. The other two funds, the Inland Labour Transport Fund and the District Road Account, have been merged in the Provincial Revenues.

Excluded Local Funds.

445. The transactions of the Chittagong Port Fund included Rs. 3,52,000 paid by Government for the improvement of the Port. The accounts of the year under review closed with a balance of Rs. 95,899-13-2, including outstanding cheques, etc. The actual cash balance of the Fund on the 31st March 1908 was Rs. 1,29,698, of which Rs. 45,302 was in the Government Treasury and Rs. 84,396 with the Bank of Bengal.

The " Mohsin Endowment Fund " account of this province was separated from that of Bengal with effect from the 1st April 1906. The separated fund of this province received during the year a contribution of Rs. 31,290 from the main fund in

Bengal to meet its expenditure. The receipts from Madrassa fees amounted to Rs. 8,286 and other receipts to Rs. 1,181. The total expenditure of the Fund was Rs. 50,046, and the deficit, Rs. 9,289, was met by contribution from Provincial Revenues.

The receipts and charges of the Cantonment Funds include Rs. 1,522 and Rs. 1,557, respectively, appertaining to the Buxa Cantonment Fund, which banks with the Military Treasure Chest at Buxa Duar.

SECTION 11.—Road and Public Works Cesses.

[*See* Report on the Provincial Rates Operations for the Revenue year 1907-1908.]

Rate, land revenue demand, and gross rental.

446. The Road and Public Works cesses were levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee in all the districts of Eastern Bengal, excepting the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the Cess Act is not in force. The current demand of land revenue was Rs. 1,24,35,349, and the valuation of gross rental amounted to Rs. 5,75,11,779.

In Assam the local rate was assessed at the rate of one anna per rupee of the annual value of all land. The current demand of land revenue was Rs. 63,27,181, but the figures for gross rental are not available.

Demands, collections, remissions, balances.

447. The current demand of cesses in Eastern Bengal amounted to Rs. 32,28,508, showing an increase of Rs. 20,964 over that of the previous year. The increase, which was due mainly to revaluations, was shared by the districts of Dinajpur, Noakhali, Malda, Mymensingh, Tippera, Bakarganj and Bogra. Collections amounted to Rs. 32,78,281, or 101·54 per cent. on the total current demand, as against 100·47 per cent. in 1906-1907. Remissions and reductions, which amounted to Rs. 12,944, or rather over Rs. 2,000 less than in the previous year, were granted chiefly in the districts of Dacca, Faridpur, Tippera, Noakhali, Rangpur and Pabna. The outstanding balance at the close of the year was Rs. 3,58,289, or 9·9 per cent. of the total demand, against 11·1 per cent. in the preceding year.

In Assam the current demand rose from Rs. 7,25,510 to Rs. 7,33,960. The increase was due to revision of assessment and new settlements. The total collections, including advance payments, were Rs. 7,72,179, or 105·20 per cent. on the total current demand, against 102·56 per cent. in the previous year. The outstanding balance at the close of the year was Rs. 83,913, or 10·2 per cent. of the total demand, against 10·6 per cent. in 1906-1907. In the province, as a whole, the collections of eleven districts reached the standard of 100 per cent. of the current demand, and in only three of the eleven districts which failed to reach this standard did the collection fall short of 98 per cent. In the case of Malda and Noakhali this falling off is explained by the increase in the demand under the recent revaluations in these districts, and in Lakhimpur it was due chiefly to the fact that one mauzadar defaulted in respect of a large amount.

Working of the certificate procedure in Eastern Bengal.

448. The total number of certificates filed for the realisation of arrears of cesses was 19,824, against 16,688 in the previous year. The increase was shared by the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Tippera, Noakhali, Jalpaiguri and Bogra. In Dacca it is attributed to the decline of voluntary payments on account of the high price of food-grains prevailing in the district, while in the remaining districts it is generally due to the filing of certificates for the recovery of accumulated petty arrears with a view to avoid limitation.

In Assam ordinarily the same notice is issued in respect of both land revenue and local rates, but when, as occasionally happens, especially in zamindari areas, local rates alone are in arrears, separate processes for the realization of these rates are issued. Coercive processes for local rate arrears were issued in 508 cases in the Assam districts.

Objections against certificates.

449. The total number of objections filed and disposed of were 810 and 804, against 793 and 772, respectively, in the previous year. The largest number of objections were disposed of in the districts of Dacca, Chittagong and Mymensingh. In 94 cases, against 144 in the preceding year, the certificates objected to were cancelled on account of the death of judgment debtors, double assessments, errors in the land registration registers, wrong entries in the ledgers, or owing to imperfect information supplied by the parties in *chalans*, or other similar causes.

Stage of procedure at which demands were satisfied.

450. In Eastern Bengal arrears were recovered in 4,560 cases, against 4,832 in the previous year, on the mere issue of notices of demand ; in 6,996 cases, against 6,107, on issue of notices for sale of defaulters' movable properties, and in 1,899 cases, against 1,668, on the issue of notices for sale of defaulters' immovable properties. Of the total number of sales (348, against 299 in the preceding year) 144 were set aside under sections 20 and 21 of the Bengal Public Demands Recovery Act, I of 1895, as amended by Bengal Act I of 1897.

Of the 497 cases in Assam, arrears were recovered in 34 cases on the issue of demand notices, in 38 cases after attachment, in 420 cases after the issue of sale notices, and in 5 cases by sale.

Valuations and revaluations.

451. A general revaluation was in progress in the district of Chittagong only. The operations on an extensive scale sanctioned for the Mymensingh district in 1907 commenced from July 1907 under the supervision of a Deputy Collector, with a special establishment entertained for the purpose. The revaluation work undertaken in Sylhet and Goalpara was finished during the year, and a proposal for the general revaluation of the Bakarganj district will shortly be submitted to Government.

Accounts for revenue-paying and revenue-free estates in Eastern Bengal.

452. The number of separate accounts opened for revenue-paying estates was 684, and the total number of such accounts at the end of the year was 29,941, with a cess demand of Rs. 4,78,522. In revenue-free estates only two separate accounts were opened, the total at the close of the year being 180, with a cess demand of Rs. 7,264.

Estates and tenures and their recorded share-holders in Eastern Bengal.

453. Owing to the opening of separate accounts, partitions and the addition of new estates, the total number of revenue-paying estates in Eastern Bengal rose during the year from 95,852 to 99,019. The number of parcels of land recorded as rent-free decreased at the same time from 14,038 to 13,278. The reduction being due to resumption by superior landlords, amalgamation with present estates, and similar causes.

Gross rental in Eastern Bengal.

454. The gross rental rose to Rs. 5,75,11,779 during the year, showing an increase of Rs. 1,53,73,425 over the original valuation of 1871, and of Rs. 2,42,556 over that of the preceding year.

SECTION 12.—Education Cesses.

Nil.

SECTION 13.—Municipal Revenue.

455. The subject of Municipal income and expenditure has been discussed in Section 8—Municipal Administration, Chapter III, of this Report.

CHAPTER VI.—VITAL STATISTICS AND MEDICAL SERVICE.

SECTION 1.—Vital Statistics.

[*See* Annual Sanitary Report of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907 ;Statistics of British India, Part V.]

Price of food-grains and its connection with vital statistics.

456. In the year 1907 there was a marked absence of high floods, and the rainfall was deficient practically throughout the province.

In the districts of the delta the deficiency of rain was not great; but in some of the districts of the Rajshahi Division, in which the average fall varies between 60 and 70 inches (Rajshahi, Bogra and Dinajpur), the deficit was as much as from 15 to 20 inches.

In the Assam Valley Districts, with the exception of Kamrup, the rainfall was below normal; its distribution was irregular, and the monsoon terminated abruptly at the end of September.

The price of food-grains continued high, varying from 6 seers to the rupee in Rangpur and Bakarganj to 8 seers in Chittagong, Malda, Cachar and Darrang; but in no case was there any marked distress.

The vital statistics give no indication of unusual mortality in the districts in which prices were highest, and the ratio of deaths from dysentery and diarrhœa in the districts which were affected in 1906 has again fallen.

Area of registration.

457. The ratios of the province are calculated on a population of 29,812,735, from which the population of the hill districts (1,150,000) is excluded.

Births.

The provincial birth rate for the year was 37·01, which is lower than the rate of the previous year (37·38) and than the rate of the previous quinquennium (39·31). The highest district rates are those of Goalpara (49·45) and Noakhali (44·51). The lowest rate is reported from Sibsagar (29·94), Mymensingh (33·01) and Pabna (33·33).

The diminution in the birth-rate in 10 out of 14 of the transferred districts noticed in the reports of 1906 still continues. It is impossible to say what the significance of this fall in the birth-rate may be: but it is interesting to note that the two districts in which alone there has been any marked rise—Chittagong and Jalpaiguri—have been least affected by scarcity.

Deaths.

458. The provincial death-rate was 29·30—less by 2·89 than the quinquennial average. The highest rates are reported from Rajshahi (48·63) and Dinajpur (42·47). The year on the whole has been a healthy one. The mortality in Rajshahi was chiefly due to cholera and fevers.

General accuracy of vital statistics.

459. The records of vital statistics are very imperfect, though their importance as the basis on which all sanitary improvements rest is beginning to be better recognized.

In the *mufassal* until the inspecting staff has been largely increased and the recording agents are better educated, it cannot be hoped for some time to come to do more than touch the general outlines of the subject. But in urban areas, where there are legal powers to enforce registration and suitable agents to make collections, there seems to be no reason why the statistics should not be made practically perfect. Of the Eastern Bengal districts, Dacca, Rangpur and Bogra are the only districts in which attention seems to have been given to the inspection of village registers.

Mortality from the chief diseases.—Cholera.

460. The provincial death-rate from cholera was 2·58, which is the same rate as for the decennium. The district of Rajshahi (8·75) suffered severely, also Bakarganj and Noakhali. In these latter two districts cholera is always more or less prevalent; they are low-lying, subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, and in many parts of them it is very difficult to get good drinking water. The four Assam Valley districts which suffered so severely in 1906 in large measure escaped, the death-rate from cholera in Kamrup falling from 6·81 to ·59.

Small-pox.

461. The provincial mortality (·29) is somewhat higher than that of the previous decade. The highest rate recorded is from Kamrup—the home of small-pox in this province—where the number of deaths reported reached the highest ratio ever recorded. The prevalence of the disease is entirely due to the Mahapurushiyas, who have religious objections to vaccination. They seem, however, to be now showing signs of yielding on the point.

Fevers.

462. The provincial death-rate from fevers was 21·17—less than that of the preceding year and of the decennium. There has been a considerable decrease in the mortality, both in urban and in rural areas. The districts of Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Goalpara showed the highest returns. The Central Research Institute has deputed Captain Christophers, I.M.S., and Dr. Bentley to investigate the cause of black-water fever. No definite conclusions have yet been obtained; but it is evident that the disease is more common than was formerly suspected, and there are strong reasons for believing that it has a direct relationship to malaria.

Kala-azar.

463. The deaths from *kála-azár* were 180 less in 1907 than in the previous year, the highest number occurring in Darrang. The disease appears to have disappeared from the Garo Hills but has been discovered on the borders of Hill Tippera.

Dysentery and Diarrhœa.

464. The death-rate (·68) was lower than that of the previous ten years (·75). The highest mortality is reported as usual from the tea districts of the Assam and Surma Valleys, chiefly from Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, and Darrang. The disease is most prevalent in "rural areas." The slight increase which was recorded in the districts affected by scarcity in 1906 has for the most part disappeared.

Plague.

465. Only eight cases of plague were reported during the year, four in Malda being of the pneumonic type.

SECTION 2.—Immigration and Labour Inspection.

[*See* Resolution on Immigrant Labour in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908.]

General.

466. This section deals only with the labour imported for employment on tea-gardens in Assam, in the oil refinery at Digboi, in coal mines and in certain saw-mills. No account is taken of temporarily employed labour, nor of immigrant labour employed in Eastern Bengal.

In February 1908 orders were issued by the Government of India on the recommendations of the committee appointed in 1906 to enquire into certain matters connected with the supply of labour for tea gardens in Assam. These orders have effected a substantial alteration in the conditions regulating recruitment. Control over contractors has been tightened, recruitment by unlicensed contractors has been abolished, and recruiters can be licensed only in their own districts. Steps have also been taken to enable managers to obtain settlement of blocks of land on favourable terms for the purpose of settling their coolies. As, however, these changes were not in force in the year under review they call for no detailed mention here.

Strength and distribution of the labour force.

467. There was a marked increase during the year in the total number of labourers employed, owing primarily to the existence of famine or scarcity in the recruiting areas. The total strength at the close of the year was 739,795, showing an increase in the twelve months of 55,587, of whom over 33,000 were adults. There was a decline of 8,411 in the number of recruitments under Act VI, but the decrease was more than compensated for by an increase of 41,430 in the number of free labour adults employed. On the last day of the year only 13·5 per cent. of the adult labour force consisted of coolies indentured under the Labour Act, as the total number of Act coolies employed had fallen to 61,430. Importations from the plains districts of the United Provinces and of Bengal accounted for nearly 40 per cent. of the total importations of the year. The number of women employed fell for the first time for some years slightly below the number of men. The percentages of the total labour force employed by the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley show practically no change from the previous year, being 62·83 and 37·17, respectively.

Provincial figures of immigration.

468. Details of immigration into the province during the past five years are shown in the following statement :—

Class of labourers.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act ... Sardari adults	5,031	4,196	5,482	3,060	4,890
Act ... Contractors' ,, ...	6,095	2,868	3,961	2,949	8,422
Non-Act adults	6,643	11,986	15,252	14,034	45,622
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	17,769	19,050	24,695	20,043	58,934
Children	4,393	5,159	7,135	5,574	25,890
Grand Total	22,162	24,209	31,830	25,617	84,824

This large addition to the immigrant population was due, as already noticed, to exceptional conditions in the recruiting districts. The arrival of nearly 26,000 children, indicating as it does the importation of a large number of families, is a healthy sign, and it is noticeable that of the adult immigrants less than 23 per cent. were indentured, against nearly 30 per cent. in 1906-1907. Less gratifying is the increase in the number of Act labourers recruited by contractors, but it was not to be expected that a contractor, with his organised system, would fail to take full advantage of the conditions of the year. The percentage of adult labourers imported into the Assam Valley districts under the Act, to the total number of adults recruited for those districts, fell from 34 to 26, and in the Surma Valley the percentage fell from 8 to 7.

Mortality during transit.

469. The mortality during transit in the year was very heavy, the number of deaths increasing from 96 in the previous year to 713, of which 627 were due to cholera. Outbreaks of cholera inevitably follow when coolies are imported in a year of scarcity and are consequently in an enfeebled condition. No less than 236 deaths occurred at Dhubri. It is hoped that the improved arrangements recently sanctioned will do much towards preventing the spread of such outbreaks when they occur.

Depots.

470. There are eight debarkation depôts, all situated in the Brahmaputra Valley. The number of immigrants who passed through the depôts was more than trebled. The marked increase in the number of coolies who passed through the Kamrup depôt (4,546 compared with 453 in the previous year) shows the increasing popularity of the journey by rail from Gauhati to the gardens of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

471. Complaints of fraudulent recruitment decreased from 89 to 72, of which 32 were made in the Lakhimpur district. Fraud or irregularity was proved in 27 cases, of which 12 occurred in the Lakhimpur district.

Repatriation.

472. The option of repatriation was given to 74 persons, the contracts of Act labourers being cancelled at the same time. Of the total number, 18 elected to remain on as free labourers, 2 died, and 54 were repatriated.

Working of Act XIII of 1859.

473. The working of Act XIII was generally satisfactory, but requires careful watching by Inspectors; for there is a tendency in certain districts to place labourers imported under Act VI under Act XIII agreements, immediately on their arrival at the gardens, and in many cases the agreements are merely verbal.

Wages of Act labourers.

474. The average monthly wage, struck on the two typical months of March and September, was Rs. 5-10-5 for men and Rs. 4-14-1 for women, when calculated according to the total number on the books. The figures calculated on the average daily working strength are Rs. 7-3-5 and Rs. 6-5-9. These figures show a slight decrease on those of the previous year. No specific reason is given for this decrease, except in the case of Darrang, where it is attributed to the general unhealthiness of the year. The provisions of section 5 of Act VI, requiring the payment of full wages to new labourers for half tasks, were observed in all districts.

Wages of non-Act coolies.

475. The average monthly earnings of non-Act labourers were Rs. 4-7-4, Rs. 3-14-7, and Rs. 2-4-1, for men, women, and children respectively; or Rs. 6-5-5, Rs. 6-0-1 and Rs. 3-11-2, if calculated on the average daily working strength. While the average wages of men showed a decrease, the wages of women and children improved. Leave was freely granted for cultivation, and full advantage was taken of this concession.

Birth-rate.

476. The recorded birth-rate per mille, calculated on the total coolie population of tea-gardens, was 27·6, compared with 28·3 in 1906-1907, and on the adult female population, 90·0 against 91·8. The birth-rate for the whole province was 37·01 on the total population, and 125·7 on the adult female population. The low birth-rates on the tea-gardens in the Nowgong and Darrang districts suggest defective registration.

Death-rate.

477. The registered death-rate for the whole labour force rose from 22 per mille in the previous year to 29·2. All districts shared the increase, but it was greatest in Kamrup and Darrang. Fifty per cent. of the increase in mortality amongst adults was due to cholera. As usual, the mortality was greatest amongst immigrants from the Central Provinces and Madras, who take less kindly to the climate of Assam than natives of other provinces. The death-rate amongst coolies, however, despite the increase, was much less than the normal death-rate of the province as a whole. There was a considerable decrease in the number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries.

Unhealthy gardens.

478. There was a large increase from 8 to 28 in the number of gardens technically classed as unhealthy, *i.e.*, those in which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately,

exceeded 7 per cent. and where the number of deaths is not less than 10. The increase was due to the importation of cholera. The Surma Valley, which was comparatively free from cholera, had no gardens classed as unhealthy. Only seven of the 28 gardens so classed were condemned as unhealthy on the non-Act list.

Offences and prosecutions.

479. Only one complaint was lodged by a coolie against his employer for ill-treatment unconnected with re-engagement, and the complaint was dismissed. Of five complaints preferred of ill-treatment to compel re-engagement, four were decided against the complainants. Applications for discharge certificates were filed in 513 cases, compared with 452 in the previous year; certificates were granted in 294 cases, against 251. Miscellaneous complaints fell from 157 to 71.

Only six cases occurred in which managers were the complainants in criminal proceedings. Two of these were complaints of assault or intimidation, and the remainder of rioting. None of these cases was of special importance, and it is gratifying to note the steady improvement in the relations between employers and labourers which the decrease in such complaints denotes. Considerable use was made of prosecutions under Act XIII, especially in the districts of Silchar and Nowgong.

Desertions.

480. There was a slight increase in the number of desertions which reached a total of 2,730. The number of warrants issued was 545, or 40 less than in the previous year, and 170 deserters were punished with imprisonment.

Inspections.

481. Of the total number of 731 gardens on the register only 439 were liable to inspection, and of these 392 were inspected at least once during the year.

Capitation fees.

482. Capitation fees realised Rs. 32,636, compared with Rs. 34,695 in the previous year. The outstandings were Rs. 698.

Colonisation.

483. The area of Government land returned as settled direct with time-expired coolies increased from 139,827 acres to 148,035 acres. During the last five years the area so settled has increased by over 42,000 acres. In addition to land held direct from Government large areas are held by coolies as sub-tenants.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

484. The receipts of this fund in Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam during the financial year 1907-1908 amounted to Rs. 60,998, a slight increase on the previous year, and the disbursements to Rs. 59,673, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 1,325. The Bengal portion of the fund showed a deficit of Rs. 6,141, but from the 1st April 1908 the receipts and charges have been provincialised, and this province has been relieved from the charge of meeting the Bengal deficits.

SECTION 3.—Charitable Dispensaries.

[*See* Triennial Report on the working of the Dispensaries in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the years 1905, 1906 and 1907; Statistics of British India, Part V.]

Number of dispensaries.

485. The total number of dispensaries, excluding Police and Railway institutions in operation at the end of the year was 425, one hundred and fifteen of which were supported by private persons. The total number, including those maintained by the Police Department and Railway authorities, was 510.

Attendance.

486. The total number of patients treated was 3,059,349, against 3,024,893 in 1906. There was a still further decrease of nearly 3,000 on the previous year in the number of patients treated at the female dispensaries of Dacca, Comilla and Mymensingh, but this is due to the latter dispensary having been closed since October 1906 for want of a lady doctor.

Of the total number of patients treated, 45·6 per cent. were Hindus, 48·5 were Muhammadans, 0·07 were Europeans or Eurasians, while 5·7 per cent. belonged to other classes.

The total number of in-patients treated fell from 24,575 to 24,455, though the number of dispensaries treating in-patients was 91, against 86 in 1906. The highest increase, from 4 to 17, was in the Lakhipur Dispensary in the district of Cachar. The dispensaries at Alipur Duar and Mokokchang also showed a marked increase. The case mortality decreased from 9·28 per cent. of the cases treated to 7·97 per cent. or, omitting paupers and destitute coolies, 6·3 per cent. The case mortality in 1907 was less than the previous two years. The number of beds available increased by 14 for males and 5 for females.

The number of out-patients increased from 3,000,318 in 1906 to 3,034,894, of whom 69 per cent. attended personally: of the total number, 1,986,614 were men, 382,951 women, and the remainder children.

Diseases.

487. As in former years, diseases of the skin caused the largest number of admissions, *viz.*, 19·1 per cent. of the total treated. Worms and malarial fever came next, with 16·6 per cent. and 15·1 per cent., respectively. Other diseases showing high returns were ulcers, rheumatic affections and diarrhœa.

Surgical operations.

488. The total number of surgical operations performed was 76,366—an increase of nearly 2,000 on the previous year. The number of deaths after operation was 0·13 per cent. The number of selected operations fell off from 3,019 in 1906 to 2,809.

Police, railway and private non-aided dispensaries.

489. During the year, 37,053 patients were treated at the 48 hospitals of the Police Department and 565 operations were performed.

There were two Public Works Department dispensaries in operation against three in 1906, the dispensary in connection with the Dacca College building having been abolished. The number of patients treated at them was 3,682.

The number of railway dispensaries working was 36; and treatment was given to 120,188 patients, of whom 1,092 were in-patients. The number of operations performed was 2,003, more than half of which were performed at Saidpur.

The total number of in and out-patients treated in private non-aided dispensaries was 1,318 and 577,251 respectively, and 16,073 operations were performed.

Financial position.

490. The total income of the dispensaries from all sources was Rs. 7,41,147, of which Rs. 1,66,666 was contributed by Government, Rs. 2,44,412 by Local Funds, and Rs. 59,367 by municipalities. Subscriptions from private persons amounted to Rs. 93,612, an increase of over Rs. 11,000 on the previous year. The total expenditure rose from Rs. 5,76,709 in 1906 to Rs. 5,97,025.

Sylhet Leper Asylum.

491. There were 21 lepers in the Sylhet Asylum at the beginning of the year, and 26 were admitted during the year, making, as in 1906, a total of 48. Six lepers died during the year, and 3 criminal lepers remained in the asylum at the close of the year. The total expenditure for the year was Rs 1,595, as against Rs. 2,023 in 1906.

SECTION 4.—Lunatic Asylums.

[*See* Statistical Returns of the Lunatic Asylums in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907; Statistics of British India, Part V.]

Number of Asylums.

492. There are two Lunatic Asylums in the province situated at Dacca and Tezpur.

Number of lunatics.

493. The total number of lunatics under treatment in the two Asylums during the year was 576, of whom 472 were already in custody at the beginning of the year. The proportion of males to females in the total number (104) of the lunatics admitted during the year was 7 to 1. The total number of criminal lunatics confined during the year was 284, the percentage of admissions being higher at Dacca and lower at Tezpur than in the previous year. Nine lunatics previously discharged were readmitted during the year. The figures show a remarkable preponderance of criminal lunacy amongst Hindus as compared with Muhammadans.

Causes of insanity.

494. In only 43 of the 104 cases admitted during the year was the cause traceable, 30 cases being assigned to physical and 13 to moral causes. *Ganja*-smoking was by far the most frequent of the specific causes mentioned. Three-quarters of the total number of cases were classified under the heading "mania."

Health of inmates.

495. The total number of admissions to hospital was 272— a very considerable increase on the previous year. The mortality for the year was high, tubercle of the lungs, dysentery and cholera being the chief causes of death. There was one case of suicide.

Accommodation.

496. There was overcrowding in both asylums during the year. This was relieved to some extent at Dacca by the removal of suitable cases to the new tubercle ward.

The construction of on additional iron-roofed barrack at Tezpur with *pucca* walls has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 8,000.

Expenditure.

497. The total expenditure was Rs. 52,785, including Rs. 360 contributed by paying patients. The average cost per lunatic at Dacca was Rs. 112-2-9 and Rs. 115-3-9 at Tezpur. Expenditure shows an increase on the figures of last year, which is partly due to constructional work at Dacca.

SECTION 5.—Sanitation.

[*See* Annual Sanitary Report of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907.]

Municipal Income and Expenditure.

498. There are 44 Municipalities, 2 Stations and 4 Unions in the province. The income of these during the year, including the opening balances, was Rs. 16,76,614, which shows an increase of Rs. 77,103 on the income of the previous year. Of this sum slightly under 42 per cent. was spent on sanitation and sanitary works. There was a considerable increase on expenditure under the headings Conservancy and Construction of Roads, and the greater portion of this increase represents expenditure by the Dacca Municipality. The expenditure on the treatment of the sick shows a marked decrease.

Sanitary works.—(a) Municipal.

499. The chief obstacles to progress are lack of funds and lack of officers to take the initiative and to supervise works. This is the reason assigned for the slight progress in many of the sanitary schemes already formulated by Municipalities. It is hoped that the recently appointed Sanitary Engineer will be of great assistance in the supervision of projects. At Dacca work in connection with the new conservancy scheme has been pushed forward and the tramway line, depôts and trenching ground are expected to be ready for work in the current cold season. Minor sanitary improvements in the existing conservancy scheme are also being carried out, but the work of this Municipality suffers heavily from want of organisation and supervison.

At Narayanganj the waterworks reached completion during the current year, and are working successfully and supplying water of excellent quality. A scheme of surface drainage has also been drawn up, which is to be completed in three successive years at a cost of Rs. 14,000.

The waterworks scheme drawn up in 1905 for the Barisal Municipality has been abandoned as too costly, and a more modest scheme is now under consideration. At Chandpur and Chittagong projects for a public water supply are under consideration, and at Chittagong successful experiments have been made in artesian boring.

In the smaller Municipalities of Eastern Bengal there is no progress to record lack of funds and lack of local interest in sanitation being almost universal. The one exception is the Municipality of Sherpur (Mymensingh) which the Deputy Sanitary Commissioner reports to be "the best-managed small town in Eastern Bengal."

(b) District and Local Boards.

500. The District and Local Boards spent approximately Rs. 1,52,385 on sanitary improvements, and Rs. 1,18,537 was spent by private individuals. Rupees 30,481 were distributed amongst the Boards as the one-third contribution from Government towards the improvement of water-supplies in villages. Advantage was taken of this scheme chiefly in the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh, but though Rs. 12,895 more was expended on these grants than in the previous year, the scheme has not met with any remarkable success. The average cost of the construction of a village well may be estimated at Rs. 300 and two-thirds of that sum is a large amount to raise in villages inhabited by men of the cultivator class.

Sale of quinine.

501. This is the first year for which there is a complete record of the sale of pice packets of quinine since the extension of the system throughout the province of distribution through the Civil Surgeon's office. Nearly 19,000 packets were sold during the year, of which nearly 17,000 were sold in the Eastern Bengal districts. But in many of the districts where mortality from fever is very high, such as Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Jalpaiguri and Goalpara, the sales are exceedingly small, and in Kamrup the sales have made no advance whatever. The sales were by far the highest in the Bakarganj district, where nearly one-half of the total number of packets sold in the year were purchased. The Postmaster General has taken great interest in the development of the scheme, and his aid is the more valuable inasmuch as the village postmaster has always proved himself the most satisfactory and most popular of the agencies tried.

Provincial Laboratory.

502. A laboratory has been opened under the Sanitary Department in connection with the Medical School at Dacca. A small room has been furnished with sufficient apparatus to undertake ordinary bacteriological and chemical investigations, and an Assistant Surgeon is being sent to Calcutta to undergo a course of training in laboratory work. Arrangements will shortly be made to undertake the chemical examination of water and the bacteriological examination of blood for clinical diagnosis.

Sanitary Board.

503. A Sanitary Engineer for the province has been appointed and has joined as a member of the Board. Only one meeting of the Board was held during the year, but a good deal of work is said to have been done by correspondence. The Deputy Sanitary Commissioner, under instructions of the Board, made an examination of the

unhealthy tracts of country in the Faridpur, Rangpur and Rajshahi districts, and inquired into the water-supply of Kamrup, with a view to ascertaining the causes of the cholera which has for many years accounted for a very high death-rate in that district. The Deputy Sanitary Commissioner's reports are now under the consideration of the Board.

SECTION 6.—Vaccination.

[*See* Triennial Report on Vaccination in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the years 1905-06 to 1907-1908; Statistics of British India, Part V.]

Vaccination Agencies.

504. The principal agents employed in vaccination are (*a*) Hospital Assistants and (*b*) Departmental Vaccinators. Of the latter there are 1,174, of whom 889 are licensed and 285 paid.

Number of operations.

505. The total number of operations performed by all classes of operators rose to 1,358,644. Of these, 1,322,995 were performed by officers of the Vaccination Department, an increase of 46,843 on the previous year. The average percentage of successful primary operations performed by the Vaccination Department was 97·32, and of revaccinations 67·26. On tea gardens 15,347 operations were performed, nearly all being primary operations, of which 95·17 per cent. were successful. The number of operations performed by dispensary agents was considerably lower than in the previous year, owing to the transfer of some areas previously served by dispensaries to the Vaccination Department.

Mortality from small-pox.

506. The ratio of deaths from small-pox reported during 1907-1908 was ·28 per mille of the population. The ratio was highest in Darrang (4·19) and Kamrup (3·45), and was generally higher in the Assam Valley than in the Eastern Bengal districts. In Darrang the high mortality was due to a severe outbreak of small-pox among some aboriginal tribes who have not yet become accustomed to vaccination : and in Kamrup it was due to an epidemic among the Mahapurushiyas, some of whom object to vaccination on religious grounds : there is evidence, however, that their prejudices are being overcome. In Cachar the ratio of deaths fell as low as ·004 per mille. The Ferazi Muhammadans of Faridpur and Bakarganj are another class of persons who continue to oppose vaccination, but the opposition in Faridpur is less marked than formerly.

Vaccination of infants in compulsory areas.

507. Of 11,222 infants available for vaccination only one-half, approximately, were vaccinated. There is a strong prejudice amongst parents against vaccination before the second year of life, which accounts to some extent for the low figures, though negligence is also a cause. There was a marked improvement in infant vaccination in Chittagong, the three municipalities of the Malda district and in most districts of the Assam Valley.

Inspecting agency.

508. With a view to increasing the efficiency of the Department, the inspecting staff of Assam was amalgamated, from the 1st April 1908, with that of Eastern Bengal, and the whole was formed into a provincial graded service. The strength of the cadre was also increased by ten officers, so as to allow one Inspector for each district and one Sub-Inspector for each circle in the plains, and one Sub-Inspector for each district in the hills; also a reserve of four Sub-Inspectors to fill vacancies caused by leave or sickness.

The percentage of inspection by the native inspectors was 91·14 of the operations performed—a very much higher percentage than is required by the rules. The best work was recorded in Bakarganj, Pabna, Rajshahi, and Dinajpur.

No candidate for the inspecting staff is now accepted unless he has passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, or is a qualified vaccinator below 25 years of age with a sufficient knowledge of English. The new rules framed for the conduct of the inspecting staff increased the personal responsibility of Sub-Inspectors for the efficiency and control of all the vaccinators working in their circles.

Vaccine depôt.

509. To meet the demands of the Eastern Bengal districts for glycerinated lymph the Vaccine Depôt at Shillong was considerably enlarged. During the year 1,583,122 capillary tubes of vaccine were loaded, or 734,714 more than in the previous year, and there was a considerable increase in the number of tubes obtained from each calf. Arrangements for cold storage are being made, which will enable a large reserve of vaccine to be kept in hand for use in the event of the supply of calves failing, or of an epidemic breaking out. The depôt cost Rs. 18,805 during the year. The cost of production per tube has decreased steadily since the institution of the depôt, and is now estimated at 2·4 pies.

Cost of the Department.

510. The total cost of the Department during the year was Rs. 1,02,095, of which Rs. 78,991 was contributed from Provincial Funds, Rs. 16,253 from District and Local Board Funds, Rs. 4,683 from Municipal Funds, and Rs. 2,168 from the Manipur State. The cost exceeded that of the previous year by over Rs. 10,000, owing chiefly to the larger outturn of vaccine from Shillong, and to the reorganisation of the inspecting staff.

CHAPTER VII.—INSTRUCTION.

SECTION I.—General System of Public Instruction.

[*See* General Administration Report for 1905-1906, Part II, pages 185-190.]

SECTION 2.—Education.

[*See* General Report on Public Instruction in Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1907-1908; Statistics of British India, Part VII.]

General.

511. The year under report has been one of great progress and expansion. The number of pupils reading in institutions of all kinds rose by over 65,000, and the tendency noticeable during the last two years for the number of Hindu pupils to decrease has been arrested, and a small increase is shown. The most gratifying feature of this expansion is the awakening of the backward classes: the number of Muhammadan pupils has increased by over 47,000. To meet and foster this expansion the total expenditure on education has increased by seven lakhs, three lakhs of this increase being expenditure from Provincial and one and three-quarter lakhs from Local Funds. A large capital expenditure is still, however, urgently needed for the construction and improvement of buildings, and will be continuously needed for some time to come. The strengthening of the inspecting staff—one of the most pressing needs of the Department—has begun, but in order to avoid a dislocation of finance and administration the process will necessarily be gradual. The task of organising and placing primary education on a sound footing has been seriously taken up, a portion of the Imperial grant for primary education has been allotted for the establishment of a net-work of Board schools side by side with the existing aided institutions, while attempts have been made to remedy the inadequacy of grants from local funds to primary schools by a process of concentration and the tentative introduction of a capitation system. Improvements have been made in the buildings of primary teachers' training schools in the transferred districts, and throughout the province the training curriculum has been reorganised and given a more practical aspect. A Central Text-book Committee has been formed, and the routine rules of school administration have been largely unified so as to bring Assam and the transferred districts into line. And, lastly, the problem of female education has been seriously taken up: a Standing Committee has been formed for advisory purposes, special grants have been allotted, and already a satisfactory increase has occurred in the number of pupils.

Statistics.

512. The number of recognized colleges and schools in the province at the close of the year was 22,520, of which 14 are colleges, and the total number of pupils was 821,976. The number of colleges and schools remained practically stationary, but there was an increase of over 9·6 per cent. on the previous year in the number of pupils, the great bulk of this increase being in Lower Primary schools. This increase is unparalleled in the past twelve years. The number of Muhammadan pupils reading the recognized courses in public institutions rose by over 15 per cent., as compared with the figures of the previous year; and the proportion of Muhammadans to the total number of students reading in all classes of institutions has risen to over 51 per cent. The number of Muhammadans at school, however, is only 29 per cent. of the Muhammadan population of a school-going age, as compared with 36 per cent. in the case of Hindus. The total number of all classes of educational institutions, public (including training and industrial schools) and private, was 25,638, and the number of pupils attending them was 880,631.

Arts Colleges.

513. There are eleven colleges in the province, four of which are State, three aided and four private institutions. The number of pupils at the end of the year was 1,394—an increase of 197 on the figures of last year. The main features of the year in collegiate education were the enforcement of the new University Regulations, and the partial distribution of the Imperial grant for aided colleges. With a view to meet the requirements of the new Regulations proposals were laid before the Government of India for raising the Cotton College, Gauhati, to the status of a first-grade college, for adding to the staff and general efficiency of the Dacca and Rajshahi Colleges, and for the establishment of a new Government college at Sylhet, o take the place of the present aided Murarichand College. Sanction has been

received, in whole or in part, for these proposals. The buildings of the new Dacca College (with the exception of the Curzon Hall) were completed. The Jagganath College (Dacca), the Victoria College (Comilla), and the Pabna College received recurring grants during the year from the Imperial grant, the two former receiving also capital grants: and the dispositions for giving out the remainder of the grant, and a considerable additional grant from Provincial Revenues, are being pushed forward rapidly. The completion of the schemes for rendering Government and aided colleges fully efficient will provide (apart from unaided colleges) four first-grade Government colleges, an additional first-grade aided college at Dacca, a second grade Government college at Sylhet, and second-grade aided colleges at Mymensingh and Comilla; and the province will thus secure a proper provision for collegiate education.

The percentage of successes of collegiate students was remarkably high being 53·6, against 35·6 in the F. A. Examination, and 37·9, against 17·6 in the B. A. Examination. Success in the B. A. Examination, both as regards number and percentage, was greater than in any other year of the past quinquennium. Of the 14 collegiate hostels in the province 7 are managed by Government and one is aided. Scholarship rights were withdrawn from the Braja Mohan Institution (Barisal), owing to persistence in disorderly courses on the part of this institution and the failure of the proprietor to give any assurance that this activity shall cease. The promulgation of the Government of India's orders of the 4th May 1907 and their enforcement by the University had a very good effect on the behaviour of collegiate students in general.

High Schools.

514. One of the principal features of the year has been the formal inspection of recognised High schools for the University. Of the 212 High schools shown in the returns at the end of the previous year, 198 were recognised by the University, and were consequently required to fulfil the conditions set forth in Chapter XXII of the new Regulations. Two special Inspectors were deputed for this purpose, and inspections for the University were also made by the Divisional Inspectors. As a corollary of these inspections and the information obtained from them, measures of reform were initiated on similar lines in this province and in Bengal. The number of High schools increased by 5, and the number of pupils by 2,737. The increase in the number of Muhammadan pupils was no less than 25 per cent. Aid was withdrawn from 7 aided High schools, either for inefficiency or for persistent participation in political agitation. The figures of success in the Entrance Examination compare very favourably with those of 1906, when 1,769 candidates entered and 62·2 per cent. were successful: in 1907, 64·3 per cent. out of 2,069 presented passed the examination.

Middle English Schools.

515. These are almost entirely of the aided type, the aid being for the most part received from local bodies. But two-thirds of the total expenditure comes from private sources. There are now 541 Middle English schools, and during the year the number of pupils rose by considerably over 5,000. In the Dacca Division 31 Middle Madrassas, which are classed as Middle English schools, were maintained, and an experiment was made in the Assam districts of introducing a capitation system into Middle English, Middle Vernacular and Upper Primary schools. The attendance at Middle Schools was on the whole excellent.

Middle Vernacular Schools.

516. The classification of Middle Vernacular schools in the transferred districts constitutes a distinction without a difference, as English is freely taught: and consequently there is always a tendency for a Middle Vernacular school to turn itself into a Middle English school, with a constant diminution in the number of institutions classed as vernacular. The number of these schools fell during the year from 420 to 414, of which 320 are aided, but the number of pupils increased by 1,400.

Primary Schools.

517. The administration of primary education lies mainly with the local bodies, —with the District Boards in the transferred districts and the Local Boards in Assam. In the former case the bulk of the schools, both upper and lower primary, are aided; in the latter most of the lower primary schools are Board institutions while upper primary schools are aided.

The natural tendency in the transferred districts has been for mushroom schools to spring up side by side in the hope of receiving a small pittance from the District Board, such schools frequently existing for the teacher rather than the teacher for the school. In order to meet this evil, while allotments have been made to Boards for the improvement of primary school buildings and the pay of the staff, grants are being withdrawn from those inefficient schools in the transferred districts, which, while diminishing the funds available for the better schools, themselves really

added nothing to the numbers under instruction, since they simply drew pupils away from the better schools. At the same time in making allotments from the Imperial grant for primary education the most important object of expenditure that has been kept in view was the establishment of Board Lower Primary schools to take the place of inefficient aided institutions. The intention of the scheme is to spread over the country a net-work of these schools, one to about each nine square miles of area. By this means the hitherto unschooled portions of the province will come to enjoy facilities for elementary education, while model schools will be set up with proper buildings and equipment and with trained teachers on adequate pay, who will be the servants of the Boards. In this way 225 schools had been erected at the end of the year, the Mymensingh district heading the list with 51. While the total number of lower primary schools decreased by 24, the total number of pupils rose to 501,170—an increase of over 42,000 on the previous year. The total expenditure on lower primary schools was over 12½ lakhs, or over a lakh more than in 1906. There was little change in the number of Upper Primary schools during the year, but an increase of over 9,000 in the number of pupils reading in this class of schools also. The increase in expenditure amounted to a little over Rs. 20,000. Although substantial progress has been made, there is still a marked tendency on the part of local bodies to decline to close down inefficient schools in order to open others of an improved character.

Training Schools.

518. In the year under report there were 54 regular schools for the training of teachers, 44 of which are in the transferred districts. Fifty-one of these are Government institutions and three are aided. Besides these, there were 62 middle schools in Assam, which, though not regular training schools, are permitted to take apprentice pupils who will become Lower Primary school teachers. The facilities for the training of teachers are still very inadequate, particularly as regards the training of English teachers. The proposed Training College at Dacca has not yet started on its career, and an amended scheme is under the consideration of the Government of India. Until this college is started there is no remedy for the present want of training arrangements in the English teaching classes of secondary schools. In order to encourage Assamese graduates in the Brahmaputra Valley to equip themselves as teachers, two special scholarships of Rs. 50 have been sanctioned to enable the holders to study at any training institution in India. For Vernacular teachers in Secondary and Upper Primary schools, there are five Divisional training schools, and when various buildings have been completed and sanction has been obtained for a number of additional stipends, these schools will adequately meet the needs of the province in this respect. The bad examination results in these schools are due to the admission of a large number of inferior candidates. Attempts were also made during the year to improve the condition of the Guru Training schools for teachers in Lower Primary schools by raising the stipend, and the allotment for contingencies, the grant of grain compensation to the instructors, and the commencement of a supply of small hostels which should considerably improve attendance.

Medical Schools.

519. There was a slight increase in the number of students on the rolls of the two medical schools of the province, the increase being wholly in the Dacca Medical School. At the Berry-White Medical School the percentage of students successful in passing the final examination was 81 of those entering, but at Dacca where the number of candidates was much larger, the percentage was only 55·5. There were 27 Muhammadan male students and one Muhammadan woman student at the Dacca School, who paid only half school fees, the other half being met by the Mohsin Fund. There was increased expenditure involved in both schools during the year, owing chiefly to grade promotions in the staff, the total expenditure being Rs. 62,092. The average annual cost to Government of educating each pupil was Rs. 175 in the Berry-White Medical School, and Rs. 138 in the Dacca Medical School.

Engineering and Technical Schools.

520. There is an increase in popular demand, manifested in the increasing number of pupils, for institutions of a technical and industrial order. The only Engineering school in the province is the Ashanulla School at Dacca. The numbers in the Apprentice and Survey Departments of that school rose considerably, and the examination results for the year were satisfactory. An advisory Board of Visitors for the school has been constituted. There were six technical schools, 5 of which teach up to the Sub-overseer standard. The number of pupils in the Sub-overseer classes rose by 47. Besides these technical schools, there are seven " B " or technical classes attached to Government High schools, and the number of pupils studying in them increased from 175 in 1906 to 290. These classes have made a most successful start. The Pabna Industrial school and the Victoria Technical Institution, Chittagong, deserve special mention. The latter is a private institution with a grant of Rs. 30, and successful

pupils receive rewards from Provincial revenues. The pupils, of whom there are 28 on the rolls, are of the higher castes, and at present there are classes for goldsmiths, tinsmiths, and carpenters.

Muhammadan Education.

521. As mentioned above, the year has been remarkable for the awakening of the Muhammadan community to the necessity of secular education. There was a great increase in the number of Muhammadan pupils reading the recognized courses in public institutions. Improvements were made in madrassas and the number of free-studentships tenable by Muhammadans in High, Middle, and Upper Primary schools has been raised to 13 per cent. of the number of pupils. The advancement of the Middle Madrassas according to the scheme initiated at the end of 1905 was very marked. These are Middle English schools specially designed for Muhammadans and differing in curriculum from a Middle English school only in the fact that Urdu, Arabic and Persian are taught as additional subjects to the Muhammadan boys. The Koran and *Ampara* are also read in the infant classes in special hours. The number of these institutions has increased from 16 to 37 during the year, and the number of pupils from 1,885 to 4,449. Expenditure has naturally doubled, but it is satisfactory that almost the whole of the expenditure incurred was met from fees and from private sources. There has been also considerable advance in Lower Primary educational facilities for Muhammadans both in the direction of adding a Lower Primary course to *maktabs* and of introducing Urdu in selected primary schools. Special efforts were made to establish Muhammadan hostels attached to High schools. Despite, however, this record of activity, examination results still illustrate strikingly the backwardness of the Muhammadan community.

Female Education.

522. A representative committee was constituted during the year to consider and advise Government upon the whole question of female education, and important results are expected from its deliberations and recommendations. Additional grants have been made to District Boards in the transferred districts for the opening of girls' schools and the encouragement of girls reading in boys' schools. The total increase of girls at school during the year was 18,054, of whom no less than 11,461 were Muhammadan girls—an increase of over 45 per cent. The results of public examination showed an improvement in every grade over the preceding year.

Text-book Committees.

523. Early in the year a Central Text-book Committee, and sub-committees for the Assam Valley, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills districts, were constituted, and the assistance rendered by the Central Committee to the Department has been very valuable. It is interesting to note that the prescription of text-books written and published locally has been extremely successful in stimulating the activity of local authors and publishers.

Discipline and Moral Training.

524. The early part of the year was marked by the issue of the memorable letter from the Government of India of the 4th May 1907, defining the conduct proper for teachers and students towards politics, and the procedure to be adopted for checking undue participation therein. The widest publicity was given to these orders, and they were subsequently adopted by the University as the basis of its instructions to its inspectors and of the orders which it passed on their reports. The promulgation of the orders and their enforcement by the University have had a marked effect for good; but in spite of them a number of schools, amongst which the Braja Mohon Institution (college and school) was eminently conspicuous, have persisted in those disorderly courses which have been mentioned in previous reports, and which have formed one of the most disquieting features of the past three years. In particular, a number of pupils, and occasionally of masters and teachers, have joined or organised associations which, whether under the name of "Volunteers" or others, have exercised a mischievous influence over the boys, and in many cases have committed actual breaches of the law. This latter tendency continued after the close of the year, and has eventually required legislation to check its more extreme developments.

Considerable progress has been made, specially in the town of Dacca, in the construction of properly managed and efficient hostels or boarding-houses, and there is a distinct tendency amongst the Muhammadan community to provide hostels by their own efforts in towns where there are large aided schools, and to meet these efforts the Lieutenant-Governor has gladly given large grants-in-aid. The progress made in the provision of organised games is satisfactory, but in certain cases there has been a tendency for healthy recreations, such as football and cricket, to be abandoned as "foreign games" and replaced by *lathi*-play, or even less desirable forms of exercise. Students not living in hostels are exposed in the larger towns to climatic and other influences which tend to injure their health as well as their character and ideas, unless wholesome employment is provided for them in their leisure hours.

525. The total expenditure on public instruction rose by a little over seven lakhs— from Rs. 51,24,074 to Rs. 58,28,536. Of this, more than sixteen lakhs, or an increase of over three lakhs on the previous year, was contributed from Provincial revenues. Expenditure.

The total increase from public funds was Rs. 4,90,930, and the bulk of this expenditure was on indirect objects. There was a very slight rise in the average cost per pupil.

SECTION 3.—Literature and the Press.

526. The total number of publications registered during the year was 247, against 134 in the previous year. Of these 89 were educational and 158 non-educational works, against 36 and 98, respectively, in the previous year. Of the 247 publications of 1907, 176 were in the first edition, 10 in new editions, 60 republications and one translation. The publications registered during the year are classified below according to the subjects dealt with :— Literary works.

(1) Miscellaneous	145
(2) Law	3
(3) Religion	31
(4) History	6
(5) Poetry	36
(6) Medicine	10
(7) Drama	3
(8) Biography	4
(9) Geography	3
(10) Periodicals	4
(11) Language	1
(12) Reference	1
Total ...	247

Of these books, 21 were written in English, 148 in Bengali, 47 in Assamese, 2 in Sanskrit, 2 in Khasi, 1 in Urdu, 8 in Nagri and 1 in Lushai.

Copyright of six books was registered during the year under report.

As regards subject matter, the result of the year's work is not hopeful, and books of practical value were rare, as was also purely literary work of a painstaking nature. No less than 39 publications were of a political nature, and the absence of moderation in tone was very marked.

527. The local press consisted of seven Anglo-vernacular and 36 vernacular papers at the end of the year, five new papers being started during the year. Some three quarters of these papers must be classed as extremist publications. The circulation both of Provincial and Calcutta newspapers has very largely increased during the year. Two papers, the *Barisal Hitaishi* and the *Rangpur Vartabaha*, were prosecuted during the year for publishing seditious articles. Newspapers.

SECTION 4.—Scientific and Literary Societies.

[*See* General Administration Report for 1905-1906, Part II, page 104.]

SECTION 5.—Arts and Sciences.

Nil.

CHAPTER VIII.—ARCHÆOLOGY.

Work of the year.

528. During the year the sum of Rs. 3,169 was allotted to this province by the Government of India as a grant in aid of archæological work. The operations of Government with reference to the restoration of the monuments at Gaur and Pandua were finally legalized, and the ruins of the old Badarpur fort were brought upon the books of the Public Works Department with a view to the prevention of further dilapidation. Rupees 15,109 were expended by the Department in the transferred districts on repairs of monuments, chiefly at Gaur and Pandua, though minor repairs were undertaken at Munshiganj and at Dacca. In Assam the ruins of the fort at Dimapur in the Naga Hills were repaired, and the restoration of two temples near Sibsagar, for which Rs. 2,218 has been sanctioned, was taken in hand.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER IX.—MISCELLANEOUS

SECTION 1.—Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

[*See* General Administration Report for 1905-1906, page 196.]

SECTION 2.—Ecclesiastical.

Ecclesiastical.

529. The Ecclesiastical establishment of the province consists of the Government Chaplains of Shillong and Dacca. Six other stations have Chaplains, whose incomes, which are derived from subscriptions from private persons or contributions from missionary societies, are supplemented by grants from Government. These stations are Darrang, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Chittagong, Saidpur and Silchar. The Government grant to these aided chaplaincies is Rs. 150 a month, except in the case of the chaplaincies of Darrang and Sibsagar, which receive Rs. 100 monthly. The chaplaincy of Sibsagar was vacant from April 1907 until the close of the year, but the vacancy has since been filled. The following table shows the sources from which the aided Chaplains receive their stipends, apart from the Government grants :—

Name of Station.	Source from which stipend is derived.
Darrang ...	... Society for the propagation of the Gospel (Rs. 100).
Sibsagar ...	... Private subscriptions from tea-planters (Rs. 350).
Lakhimpur ...	... Society for the propagation of the Gospel (Rs. 200).
Chittagong ...	... Additional Clergy Society (Rs. 100), private subscriptions (Rs. 100).
Saidpur ...	... Calcutta Diocesan Additional Clergy Society (Rs. 200).
Silchar ...	... Cachar Clergy Fund (House and Rs. 100), Society for the propagation of the Gospel (Rs. 150)

SECTION 3.—Stationery.

Stationery.

530. The value of stationery supplied during the year by the Controller of Stationery, Calcutta, to the various Government offices and Departments in this province was Rs. 1,59,039. This represents a net increase over the previous year of over Rs. 44,000, the increase being due to the fact that a large number of typewriters were supplied to the several departments, and that large supplies of paper for printing forms were made.

SECTION 4.—Printing.

Printing.

531. The cash receipts of the Secretariat Press amounted to Rs. 4,914, or Rs. 1,200 in excess of the receipts of the previous year, while expenditure rose from Rs. 1,22,782 to Rs. 1,71,210. The outturn of work exceeded that of the year preceding by nearly 60 per cent. ; the value of work done was Rs. 1,94,074, of which Rs. 16,000 represented the value of lithographic Vandyke process-printing. The profit and loss account showed a net gain of Rs. 22,864, but this makes no allowance for depreciation on buildings.

SECTION 5.—Veterinary Department.

[*See* Report of the Civil Veterinary Department, Eastern Bengal and Assam, for the year 1907-1908.]

Veterinary instruction.

532. The arrangement made in 1906 with the Government of Bengal for training the subordinate staff of the Department at the Belgachia Veterinary College was maintained during the year. Fourteen Government stipendiaries from Assam attended the college, of whom 11 passed the final examination. Out of twenty District Board stipendiaries who attended the College during the year seventeen passed. Sixteen qualified Veterinary Assistants were sent to the Mukteswar Laboratory for instruction in inoculation.

Veterinary hospitals and dispensaries.

533. Two new veterinary hospitals with accommodation for in-patients were opened at Malda and Rangpur, respectively; and the Mymensingh dispensary, which had been closed in the previous year for lack of an assistant, was re-opened. At the close of the year there were in all seven hospitals and six dispensaries; and 405 in-patients and 13,500 out-patients were treated. While the number of in-patients is lower than that of the previous year, the number of out-patients has more than doubled.

Treatment of diseases.

534. The statistics regarding the mortality amongst cattle from contagious diseases are not reliable, and one of the chief disadvantages under which the Department labours is the fact that outbreaks of disease are not reported, or are reported too late to allow of effective assistance being rendered. As usual rinderpest accounted for the largest number of deaths, the number reported being 32,823. The districts of Sylhet, Kamrup and Sibsagar suffered most from all forms of cattle disease.

Over 52,000 animals were inoculated against rinderpest with most satisfactory results. Inoculation largely occupied the attention of the Department, and the services rendered by the special veterinary officer employed, with the help of Government, by the Surma Valley Branch of the Tea Association have been so satisfactory that Government has sanctioned for a further period of one year the continuance of the grant of Rs. 10,000 towards the up-keep of this special establishment.

Two Veterinary Assistants have been specially employed in the treatment of the cattle and tonga-ponies working on the Shillong-Gauhati road. Proposals for the extension of the Glanders and Farcy Act and for the improvement in reporting outbreaks of cattle disease are now before Government.

Cost.

535. The cost of the Department rose from Rs. 25,269 in 1906-1907 to Rs. 64,511.

THE PROVINCE
OF
EASTERN BENGAL
AND
ASSAM
REFERENCES
BHUTAN
BAY
OF
BENGAL
SHILLONG
DACCA
AGARTALA
AIJAL
KOHIMA
MANIPUR
DIBRUGARH
SADIYA
DIHING
DAPHLA
MISHMIS
ABORS
AKAMS
MIRIS
ZAYUL
LO-NAKPO
ENGLISH BAZAR
RAMPUR BOALIA
CHITTAGONG
NOAKHALI
FARIDPUR
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